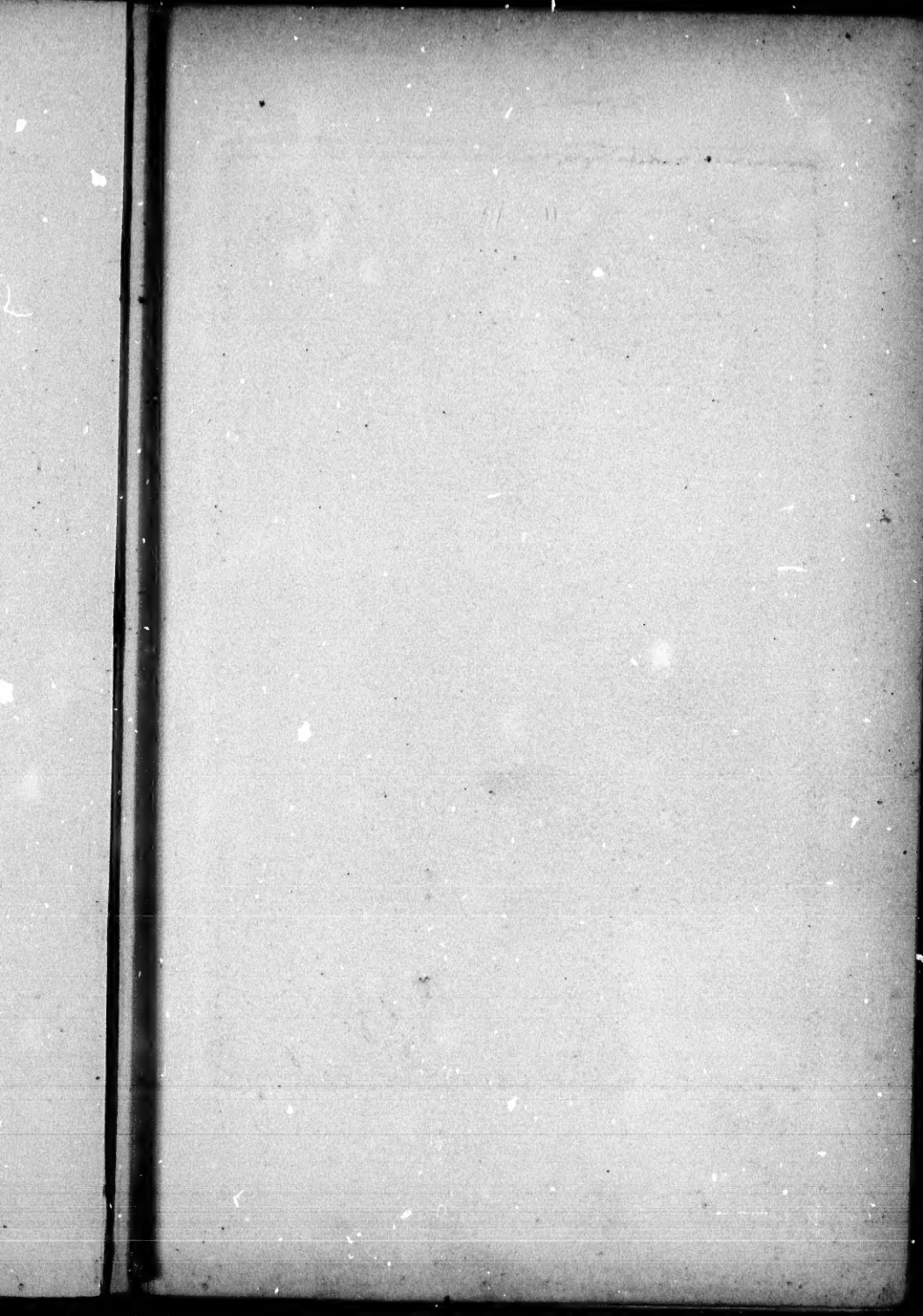


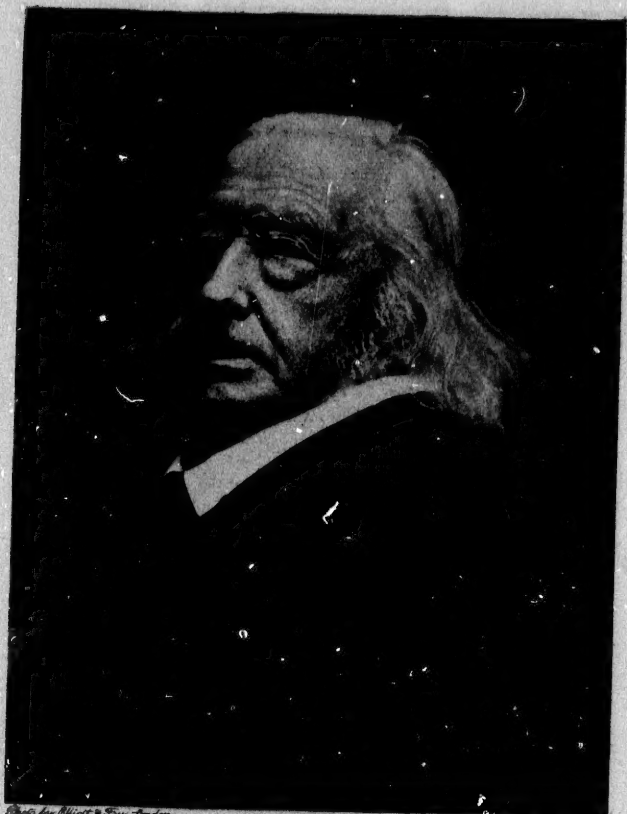


**PROFESSOR BLACKIE.**









Painted by Elliott & Fry, London.

Engraved by R. B. Smith

John Blackie

# PROFESSOR BLACKIE

AND HIS DOINGS.

WITH A SKETCH

OF HIS LIFE

BY JAMES KENNEDY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON: JAMES CLARKE & CO.



John A. Smith

# **PROFESSOR BLACKIE**

**HIS SAYINGS AND DOINGS.**

**A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

**By His Nephew**

**HOWARD ANGUS KENNEDY.**

**With Illustrations.**

**London: JAMES CLARKE & CO.**

**—  
1895.**



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THIS ACCOUNT OF  
JOHN STUART BLACKIE  
IS DEDICATED, IN  
SYMPATHY AND RESPECT,  
TO HIS WIFE,  
WHOSE LOSS A NATION SHARES.

✓

## THE BOOK, AND ITS SUBJECT.

THIS is a small book about a great man. A biography—not indeed complete, for no two octavos could give a full account of such a life, but approaching completeness—will have been published before this appears in print. Miss Anna Stoddart has produced, from plentiful stores of authoritative information, a work to which I hope many readers of these pages may be induced to turn. Indeed, it is not for those who can obtain the larger work that the smaller has been written, but for the many who cannot. It will be evident at the same time that the present volume has an entirely independent origin and existence.

A strong man breasts the tide; a great man turns it. Not once alone, nor only twice, did Blackie justify his title by such a test. Neither of him nor of any man can it be said that he was always great and

altogether original; and I am not concerned, even if it were possible for me, to determine his precise degree of greatness or originality. Much of our debt to Blackie is owing to Bunsen; some, far less than is commonly imagined, to Carlyle. He himself said that the writers who had most influenced him were Aristotle, Plato, Goethe, Shakespere, Scott, Burns, Wordsworth, and the Apostle Paul. From a multitude of other sources he drew such nourishment as they had for him, assimilating the good and rejecting the useless with a peculiarly active mental digestion. "Perhaps even more important," he said, "towards the achievement of a noble life than a memory well stored with sacred texts is an imagination well decorated with heroic pictures." In both these ways his mind was richly furnished, and from such a storehouse he brought forth continually "things old and new." Deny the existence of originality if you will—trace all good things right up to heaven, by a Jacob's ladder direct or through long lines of ancestors and teachers—and the fact remains that John Stuart Blackie

clothed with a new form the ideas he had received, and charged them afresh with a penetrating force that made men listen and accept. He was a seer, who saw deeply if not always to the bottom, and opened the eyes of other men to see. He was a prophet who made prophets; a teacher who not only taught but inspired others to teach. He showed the young how to quit themselves like men, the old how to keep the spirit of youth. He presented to the student, as Professor Laurie has said, "the true type of the scholar in the large and unconventional sense of that word: always in search of the truth, always proclaiming the inalienable right of reason to be heard in the affairs of men; always proclaiming the eternal attractions of the good and the beautiful within or without the academic walls."

A man of the world who set a shining example of unworldliness, he was too genuinely religious to be "other-worldly." Most orthodox of heretics, his Protestantism was as deep as his Catholicity was wide. A fervid patriot, he proved his love



by chastising his country even more than by chastising her foes; and his countrymen, to their credit be it said, came to love him with a personal devotion such as no flatterer could have won. His sayings and doings often made them angry; but the roots of his popularity ran deep into the Scottish heart. Edinburgh—well, he was a part of the city. Not Sir Walter's monument nor the Castle Rock itself was a more familiar object than the old but ever young Professor, marching along so lithe and erect,—the brown plaid wound over his chest and shoulders, the stout silver-knobbed staff in his hand, the clean-cut face full of distinction, the long white hair flowing from a wideawake pressed well down over the keen, grey eyes. The citizens felt a pride of ownership in him. He poured shame upon their idols—fashion in West-end circles and democracy in the multitude—but they still cherished, in the one case a genteel and in the other an overflowing, affection for their censor. From Edinburgh you may travel round the world in any direction, sure that wherever you find a Scottish

heart you will see a face that brightens with affection at the sound of Blackie's name.

Great as he was in the public esteem, he had a private fame still more illustrious. He brought into the home a soul unspotted by the impurities of the outside world. The more intimately he was known, the more dearly he was loved and the more fervently admired. He was "a hero to his valet."

To call him the last of the Scots would be a piece of pessimism, and pessimism is a vice that he abhorred. There are men in Scotland yet, and in every Scottish community in the world, who are carrying forward the flag he lifted so high. But Scotland seems a different place since he has gone, and Scotsmen are a nation bereaved.

Thou brave old Scot! And art thou gone?

How much of light with thee's departed!

Philosopher, yet full of fun,

Great humorist, yet human-hearted;

A Caledonian, yet not dour,

A scholar, yet not dry-as-dusty,

A pietist, yet never sour!

O stout and tender, true and trusty,

Octogenarian optimist,

The world for thee seemed aye more sunny;  
We loved thee better for each twist  
Which streaked a soul as sweet as honey.

We shall not see *thy* like again!

We've fallen on times most queer and quacky,  
And oft shall miss the healthy brain  
And manly heart of brave old Blackie!\*

The aim of the following pages is not to give a severely chronological list of Professor Blackie's doings and sayings. Although he did one thing at a time and did that well, it was never long before he was doing something else. Subserviency to dates in the case of such a man would keep the reader dancing from subject to subject and back again in a peculiarly bewildering fashion. The writer has attempted to give not only a plain narrative of the Professor's outward doings, but a moderately coherent account of his sayings on the great questions with which he dealt. No attempt has been made to hide such incidents, however laughable, and such extreme and audacious assertions, hasty as they sometimes

\* From "Punch," March 9th, 1895, by permission of the Proprietors.

were, as show the perennially boyish side of the Professor's nature. Of incidents that might bring anything worse than laughter upon his memory there are none to hide.

In writing the Life of Robert Burns, Blackie said: "I have allowed the poet, both in his verse and in his prose, to be as much as possible his own portrait painter." I have followed this example, while gratefully taking advantage of the reminiscences of old students and other friends, and not neglecting the duty of independent research. The book has been finished neither without difficulty nor to the writer's satisfaction; but if, as I hope, it helps to spread and perpetuate the knowledge of the good and wise Professor, its aim will be achieved and its existence justified.

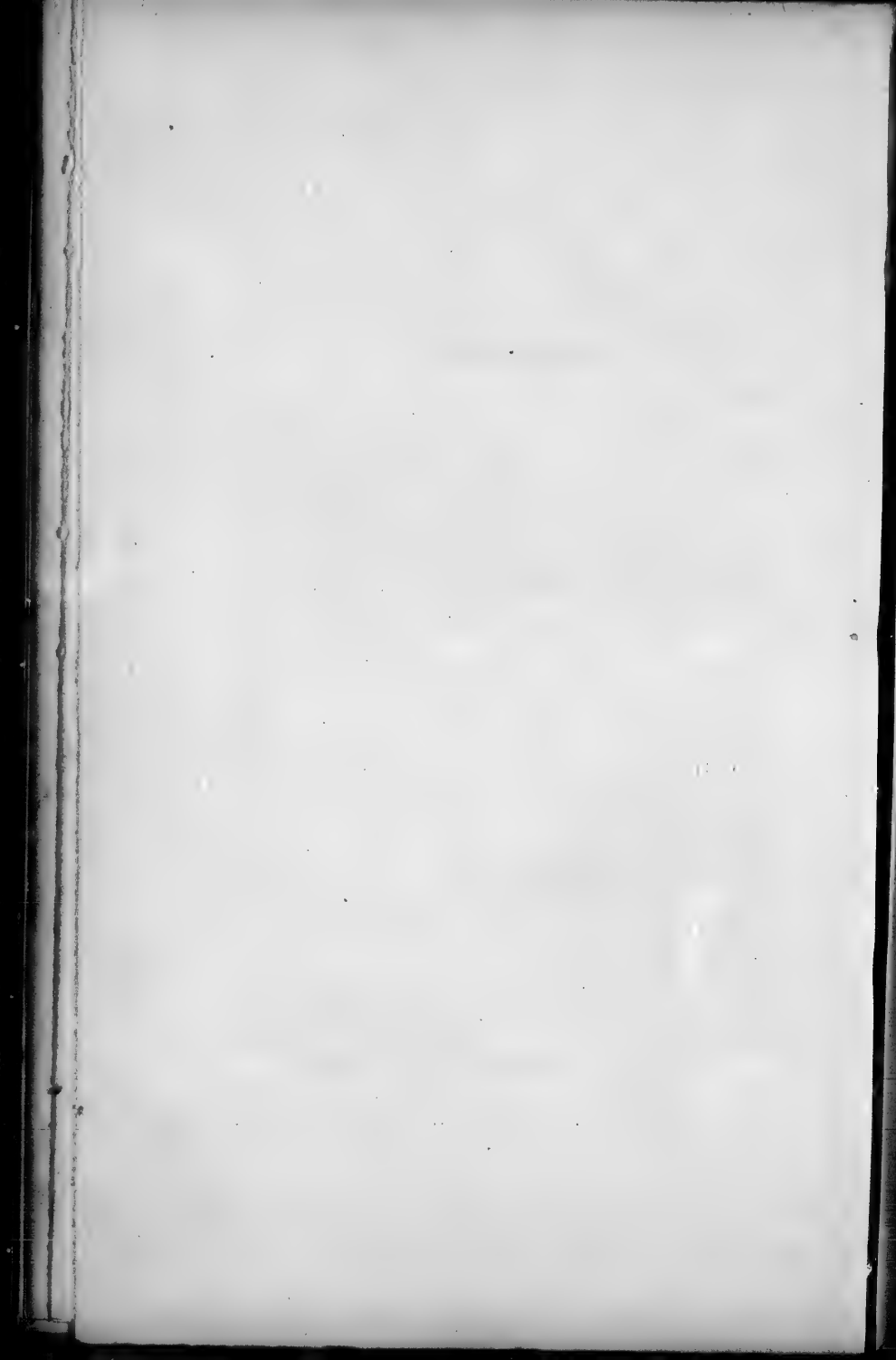
H. A. KENNEDY.





# CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. His Forebears ... ..	1
II. The Boy ... ..	14
III. Going to be a Minister ... ..	22
IV. Germany and Italy ... ..	34
V. "Stickit" ... ..	46
VI. The Fight for the Chair ... ..	59
VII. Professor of Humanity ... ..	67
VIII. Excursions ... ..	85
IX. The Greek Chair ... ..	102
X. Educational Reform ... ..	110
XI. Rational Greek ... ..	122
XII. Professor and Students ... ..	136
XIII. Noctes Hellenicæ ... ..	156
XIV. His Politics ... ..	163
XV. The Highlanders' Champion ... ..	175
XVI. The Celtic Chair ... ..	185
XVII. The Scottish Nationalist ... ..	205
XVIII. Poet and Verse-maker ... ..	218
XIX. The Good, the True, and the Beautiful	234
XX. Self-Culture, and Some Other Books	271
XXI. English Excursions ... ..	285
XXII. Farther Afield ... ..	298
XXIII. The Man, and Some of His Friends...	312
XXIV. The End ... ..	329
Published Works of John Stuart	
Blackie ... ..	338
Index ... ..	341



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
<b>PORTRAITS OF JOHN STUART BLACKIE.</b>	
As a Boy of Five. From "The Strand Magazine." Engraved from an oil painting in the possession of Mrs. Blackie ...	17
At the Age of 45. From "The Strand Magazine." Engraved from a lithograph ...	112
At the Age of 68. From a photo by Macara ...	312
At the Age of 80. Etched from a photograph by Elliot and Fry. (Frontispiece.)	
From a Political Cartoon, 1880 ... ..	165
"A Professor of the Highlands" ... ..	196
<b>ALEXANDER BLACKIE. From an oil painting by Sir Watson Gordon, President of the Royal Scottish Academy, in the possession of Mrs. Kennedy ... ..</b>	
	8
<b>GEORGE S. BLACKIE. From a steel engraving</b>	93
<b>THE HOMES OF JOHN STUART BLACKIE.</b>	
His Father's House, Marischal Street, Aberdeen; and the Humanity Professor's House in Old Aberdeen ... ..	88
His Edinburgh Homes: 24 Hill Street, from 1860 to 1882; 9 Douglas Crescent, 1882 to 1895 ... ..	152
His Highland Home: Altnaoraig, Oban ...	192



	PAGE
<b>HIS UNIVERSITIES.</b>	
Marischal College, Aberdeen ... ..	69
Arms of Marischal College, Aberdeen ... ..	67
Edinburgh University ... ..	138
Arms of Edinburgh University ... ..	102
<b>FACSIMILES.</b>	
Letter from Edinburgh, 1824 ... ..	24
Latin Exercise for "the Gooders," 1827 ... ..	32
Last Letter from Aberdeen, 1852 ... ..	106
"Rain!" ... ..	188
His Favourite Mottoes ... ..	241
Letter from His Father: "Victory," 1852	104
<b>STODART ARMS</b> ... ..	3
<b>ST. GILES'S CATHEDRAL, EDINBURGH</b> ... ..	336

9  
7  
8  
2  
4  
2  
6  
8  
1  
4  
3  
36

10

# PROFESSOR BLACKIE,

## HIS SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

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### I.

#### HIS FOREBEARS.

THE story of John Stuart Blackie, if a man's life began at his birth, should open in Glasgow; but when we begin to ascend the ancestral streams which met there eighty-six years ago, we find ourselves in far more attractive surroundings. The Blackies, a small but energetic tribe, belong to Kelso, in the border country. For the most part mechanics and "merchants," or tradesmen, achieving the high nobility of honest work, until this century they were unknown to fame. Alexander Blackie, the son of a Kelso "merchant" and of Alison Stuart his wife, was early left an orphan. He was not friendless, or left entirely to his own devices. In Glasgow, where he worked for his bread from the

age of fourteen, he was faithfully put through his catechism on Sunday evenings by his mother's kinswoman, Mrs. Lockhart. Mrs. Lockhart's own boy, John, became the son-in-law and biographer of Sir Walter Scott. As for John Lockhart's cousin—"Scotch cousin," in what degree I cannot tell—at first he seems to have thought of becoming a manufacturer. At any rate, he worked at the loom; and in more prosperous days, especially when his guests were "ower genteel," he used to apologise for his inability to sit still on a chair by saying, "When I was a weaver in Glasgow——!" Later on—but he was still a very young man—he carried on the trade of a drysalter, or oilman.

At the head of a long list of entries in the old two-volume family Bible stands this: "Alexander Blackie and Helen Stodart, married at Airbless by the Rev. William Thomson, of Dalziel, 7th July, 1807." The Stodarts were a Hamilton family of some repute; perhaps a couple of pegs higher than the Blackies in the social scale, if that were of any consequence. A cousin, great in heraldry, Mr.

Robert Riddell Stodart, has traced them back to John Stodart in Liberton—three miles south of Edinburgh—who was a very old man when Charles I. and his Parliament came to blows. John's great-grandson, James, had nine children, of whom three may here be mentioned—

POST NUDES LUX.



Stodart.

namely the third, James, a farmer, who gave Robert Burns his breakfast on the poet's famous pony-ride to Edinburgh; the fourth, John, with whom Rob took his lunch, and who became the grandfather of William and Robert Chambers; and the fifth, William, an architect of some note, a man of literary taste, a friend of the poet Graeme, and the grandfather of John Stuart Blackie. William Stodart was born in 1740, five years before Prince Charlie's rebellion, and married Christina Naismith,

daughter of Hamilton's chief magistrate. The architect died, a few days after his wife, in 1790, leaving Bothwell Brig and four small daughters to witness that he had not lived in vain. The eldest of these little orphans—she was only seven—was the Helen of our old Bible. She was brought up, together with her sisters Marion and Margaret, by her mother's kinsfolk. A few minutes spent in looking at the mother of such a son cannot be wasted, and no apology is needed for presenting such dim outlines of a word-portrait as exist.

But for one bosom friend, who valued her letters enough to copy and bind them, we should know next to nothing of Helen Stodart. From these letters, which begin in 1804 and continue nearly till her death in 1821, it is clear that she was a young woman of remarkable character. "Blest with the best education," as she says, and "bookishly inclined," she had that strong dash of common-sense which afterwards kept her scholar-son from becoming a pedant. This quality would have saved her from degenerating into a blue-stock-

ing, even if a family of ten had not removed the possibility of such a fate. Genuinely religious, her soul rose against the high-and-dry discourses of her day, as well as against the morbid extreme of religiosity. "Let us not mourn over those virtues we do not possess," she exhorts her friend, "but be active and vigilant; seek and we shall find; let us be cheerful in doing our duty." She early came to the practical conclusion, not even now so generally admitted as it ought to be, that "Faith in Christ, if it does not influence our whole conduct in this life, can avail little in another." Despising those "sequestered virtues" which are "too delicately brought up to endure fatigue," she avows, "I am always aiming to be what I have never attained." Naturally, she discarded that mental asceticism which confines the aspiring heart to "religious" literature. "Too much religious and sentimental reading clogs the mind," she says in one place; and in another, "I always thought much reading of books of Divinity rather weakened and overwhelmed the mind than strengthened and ennobled

it." Nature she loved, but not solitude. "We have had variety of employment for our hands; our ears are charmed with rural music, our eyes feasted with rural scenes; but what are these? Quite insipid without society!" This was in 1806.

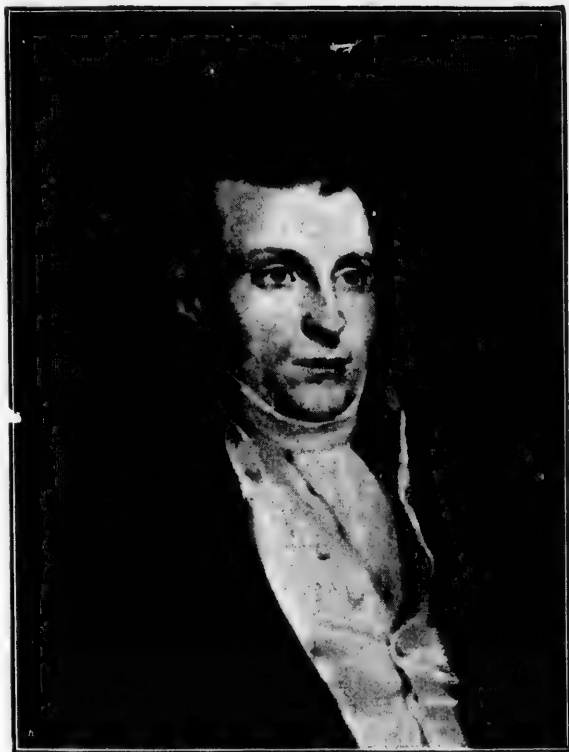
She had quite enough of society before long, though not always of the ideal kind with which she would have peopled the rural paradise of Airbliss and Silverton. Marriage came in 1807. At first the young couple made their home on the Abbey Hill, near Holyrood Palace; but after a few months they moved from Edinburgh to Glasgow. There, at Melville Place, on May 29th, 1808, the first child was born. On July 28th, 1809, in Charlotte Street, came the second, who was baptized as "John Stuart" by the Rev. Henry Mushet, of Shuttlestone. With these two little ones, and a still more recent arrival, Mr. Blackie in 1812 took his wife to Aberdeen, having been appointed by the Commercial Bank as its first agent in that city. The family settled down—Aberdonians, at any rate, will like to know these trifles—in a



strangely-situated house, with its front on Marischal Street and its side several storeys lower on Virginia Street, one road being carried over the other by a bridge. Marischal Street has come down in the world since then, though its bridge is as high as ever. The bank is now a humble eating-house; but the lodgers who share the upper floors no longer have to send to the top of the street for their water, as the banker had. A peep of the River Dee and the heather slopes beyond was to be had from the windows, but otherwise the view consisted of granite—not the clean granite of the newer town, but black with the dust of countless coal carts passing up from the wharf. The surroundings were not calculated to feed the love for beauty in a woman or develop it in a child. As to surroundings of the human sort, the young wife says: “We live very retired. The people in this town visit in a very ceremonious style, which neither Mr. Blackie nor I like; and so we are not obliged to cultivate many friends.” “I have not that enlightened society which my imagination pictures, but I have inde-

pendence, which of all things I enjoy. I am not obliged to receive idle and insipid visitors that I do not care for." "There is no music amongst us, — little entertainment of any kind but eating and drinking; I mean dinner parties. From tea till supper the never-failing entertainment is cards. Then the toddy commences, which lasts till twelve or one."

Although husband and wife agreed as to the shortcomings of Aberdeen society, they could not compensate each other for the deficiency. Alexander Blackie was a lively fellow, a singer of rattling songs, with "a great flow of spirits," "a ready tongue," "full of joke and fun," "very famous at talking nonsense," quick of temper, and a keen man of business. His son-in-law gives an illustration of this last quality. A certain firm, of the highest repute, owed the Commercial Bank £40,000. Mr. Blackie came to a shrewd conclusion that the firm were going beyond their depth, and, resisting all influence and pressure, even from his own directors, he left no stone unturled till the debt was all paid off. Soon after



ALEXANDER BLACKIE.



that the firm failed, bringing another Aberdeen Bank down in the crash; and the Commercial Bank directors thanked Mr. Blackie for saving them from themselves. This by the way. According to the childish recollections of one who spent much time in her house, Mrs. Blackie "was a good height, dark hair, dark eyes beaming with kindness, nimble in her movements, cheerful in manner, did not care about dress, though always tidy, and a great reader." An attractive picture, but incomplete. The banker's wife was a far more serious thinker than himself, and too profound for him either to sympathise with or to understand, especially as she was "bitter bad at speaking." Their eldest daughter, who was nearly thirteen when her mother died, preserved the impression that "she was a very quiet, timid person, silent and reserved, and certainly not demonstrative to her children." The meagreness of these recollections, to which Professor Blackie could add nothing, is poorly supplemented by a solitary incident, not bearing on the family life but recalling an event of

interest in the history of public opinion. To use the daughter's words: "On the occasion of the illumination for Queen Caroline's acquittal, my mother and father were dining at Mr. Ewing's, opposite us. As she was standing at the lighted window dressed for the occasion, with a white satin hat and feathers, which happened to be the favourite costume of the queen, the crowd below gave a shout of applause, supposing that she was intended as a representation of their idol."

Only a mother knows what the burden of motherhood means; and Helen Blackie had the burden in overflowing measure, with neither opportunity nor capacity for much of the compensating joy. "I have been sadly kept down," she wrote in 1815, when she had three children living and had buried two—"sadly kept down with a small family, fully as large as I am able to manage, having not much ability that way." When three more children had come, and two gone, she continued: "As to my own method with children, I have nothing to boast of. The task is difficult. Some

people have a natural turn for it, which I am afraid is not the case with me." The general cares of the household, too, were heavy. She had not been idle in her maiden days; the spinning-wheel was her steady companion at Airbliss; but she was "a bad hand at gown-making or anything of that kind." "Very different is the case now," she writes after eleven years of married life. "It is not as in days of old, when you once told me that my own thoughts were my greatest amusement." "We have enough to make ourselves and friends comfortable," she was able to say, "and a little to give away to the Bible Society"; but such savings were made at heavy cost to the housewife. Acknowledging a shawl sent from India by her friend, she remarks, "It is the piece of dress I stood most in want of, but I have got so many to provide for that I myself am always the last person to be considered." At another time, "I have so much to sew, and such a bustle in the house, that I have little quiet for reading, although I attempt it sometimes"—and gallantly she kept up the



attempt to the end. "My grand aim in all my domestic economy is to preserve my temper unruffled if possible! I would wish to be as little impressed with disagreeable trifles as possible"—an optimism of the deliberately-aimed-at sort, like that which her son so happily achieved. Fortunately, there was a sister to carry part of the housewife's load. Marion Stodart was a second, and perhaps more motherly, mother to Helen's children. It was she who sang to them the old Scottish songs, most ravishing of entertainments to a Scottish child. One of these ballads, which seems to have dropped out of sight and hearing, was a tragic legend of the West country:

There were seven gypsies all in a row,  
And they were brisk and bonny, O;  
They sang till they came to the Earl o'  
Cassilis' gate,  
And there they sang sae sweetly, O.  
They sang sae sweet, and sae complete,  
That down came the fair leddy, O;  
And when they saw her weel-faured face  
They cast the glamour ower her, O.  
So she's taen off her high-heeled shoes  
That are made o' the Spanish leather, O,

And she's put on her Highland brogues  
To skip amang the heather, O.

On the discovery of which the Earl  
"saddled to him his milk-white steed,"  
and rested not till he had hanged the  
seven gypsies on a tree.

It was Marion Stodart who took charge  
of the six motherless bairns in 1821, when  
Helen Blackie brought her tenth child  
into the world and died. Four years later  
Alexander Blackie married a beautiful  
widow, Mrs. Margaret Paterson, a grand-  
daughter of James Watt, and five more  
children were the result; but Marion  
Stodart was still the angel of the house,  
and lived not only to comfort her brother-  
in-law when for a second time he was left  
a widower, but to see her youngest niece  
a grandmother, and her eldest nephew an  
old man.

## II.

### THE BOY.

WHEN this same nephew was only six years old, his mother was able to say, "He seems a steady boy, and fond of his books." Two years later she spoke of her family as "all fine lively children, none of them beautiful, but all have something pleasing—a certain something which I cannot describe." In the same year, however, she ventured on a piece of description which deserves our gratitude. "As for John, he is all consideration. He is also possessed of a good deal of the milk of human kindness. He is rapid in all his motions, and methodical to a fault. Nothing that can be done to-day is put off till to-morrow with John. He is ever happy with the present; anything new rather vexes than delights him." Then follows a prophecy of which the beginning is as safe and the ending as wrong as

prophecy can well be. "His character depends much on the society he forms in after life. If they are good I expect to see him a fine young man, very pushing and fond of money-making, but not much religion about him."

We have just one more glimpse of the mother and children together before the great separation. "Christina has been studying French. She is fond of it, and the language seems to flow as easily from her tongue as English. She is not like her mother in this respect, having the gift of speech in a very eminent degree. John," now ten years old, "is at the grammar school. He is considered a good scholar, and has got several prizes. Christina and he are both rather clever than otherwise. They are lively children, impatient of restraint, perversely averse to everything that will cross their vain imaginations. I need not add that to keep them within the bounds of prudence and decorum is no easy task." Poor mother!

"You know I am a very incorrect person," Helen Blackie wrote once, by way of apology for having forgotten a date.

This was a weak point also in her son's memory—a faculty nevertheless which has preserved for us some youthful recollections not on any account to be omitted from this book. The Professor has left two admirable pieces of autobiography, one printed in "The Pupil-Teachers' Monthly" in 1888, and the other, four years later, in "The Young Man." Both, and especially the latter, help to kindle a welcome familiarity between us and the interesting youth whom the present generation has only known as a snowy sage.

"From the family," he says, "I learned obedience and affection. I was neither pampered nor unduly repressed, and never thrust into premature manhood by being removed in my boyish days from the kindly influence of the paternal roof and the home fireside. I always got a penny from my father on certain notable days to buy rock, when I was a good boy, and a sound flogging when I was a bad boy." Both of these experiences he decided—not at the time—were extremely beneficial, and especially the flogging. He was only thrashed twice, it is fair to say—once for

saying he had been at school when he had been sulking in concealment, his aunt having made him take some undesired



JOHN STUART BLACKIE, AGED FIVE.

broth, and the other time for "calling names" at a servant-girl against whom he had a grudge. "I was, I fancy," he says, "as a rule, a very sober, sensible, and well-behaved human creature." "Of my

early boyhood I have nothing either very sorrowful or very glad some to tell—nothing that would make a chapter in a novel, or even give matter for a sentimental sonnet. I just lived as the sparrows live, when they hop about picking up what may lie on the roadside, or as the cattle and the sheep live when they are driven comfortably from field to field.” As for book-learning, the child would have none of it. He would treat the “gooders,” as he used to call his little brothers and sisters, to a dramatic rendering of a psalm or soliloquy; but the ear and not the eye had taught him his lesson. He could neither read nor write till he was about eight years old, when he first went to school: but then he soon made up for lost time.

Though his mother writes of “John” as taking prizes at the grammar school, his name does not appear on the registers of that institution. “I was sent,” his own account is, “to a private school, well conducted by Peter Merson. I learned a good deal about classical matters,” and little else, it seems. “It was the eternal Latin grammar, grammar, grammar,” he



told an Aberdeen audience only last year, with jovial exaggeration; "nobody talked about anything but Latin grammar. All the beauty of God's creation was never looked at for a moment." A "systematic training of the body for grace and strength" was equally undreamt of in the granite city. However, he says, "we had 'robbers and rangers' for our legs, and marbles and hoops for our arms and fingers and our eyes; and every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon we had free time to perambulate the green 'links' on both sides of the 'Broad hill,' giving scope to our kites (which we called dragons), and speeding our balls from hole to hole with that combination of strength and calculation which the noble game of golf requires. For cruel sports, such as hanging cats, and bloody noses, and a boyish pugilism, I had never any taste." No taste, but some capacity, it seems. One of his schoolfellows quarrelled with him and flung the usual challenge: "Will you fight me?" "No," said little Blackie, "but I'll knock you down"; and he did.

After four years of Latin grammar and less-considered trifles, the boy was sent to Marischal College, "where, for a few, in those stern granite countries," as Carlyle says in a reference to the founder, "the diviner pursuits are still possible (thank God and this Keith) on frugal oatmeal."

Blackie has put on record that Scottish students "died rather of eating too little than of eating too much"; but he was never in danger from either. That his mental digestion did not suffer more than his physical is surprising, for he entered the University at the ridiculous age of twelve—"an age not uncommon in those days, when, by the fault of the ignoble nobles who, at the Reformation, seized on the funds that should have been appropriated to middle schools and colleges, the universities were doomed, as they still are in no small measure, to devote themselves to the drill of crude boys rather than to the stimulation of ambitious youth." The mental stage he had reached in 1821 Blackie describes thus: "From the school I learned the habit of persistent intel-

lectual work over books, of accuracy in whatever I handled, and of a laudable ambition to do my best in competition with my comrades; but, beyond this intellectual drill, principally through the medium of the Latin language, I learned little at school." His college career may be put in one sentence, also of his own: "I went through the usual routine of Greek, mathematics, natural history, and natural philosophy, during a three years' course, with credit in three of the classes and distinction in one." Strange to say, it was in mathematics that he achieved this fleeting distinction. "Some people say," he remarked twenty years afterwards, "that mathematics is a science for angels; but I could never manage it." "*But!*"

Now came the great question, always hard enough to answer, What is the boy to do when he becomes a man? Alexander Blackie wanted to make a lawyer of him, and John actually spent six months in a solicitor's office. Fancy the feelings of a human Jack-in-the-box with the lid screwed down!

### III.

#### GOING TO BE A MINISTER.

WHEN John was a little lad of six, and his parents had been discussing the matter of education, his mother wrote to her friend in India, "I would like that the minister would take John under his charge, as I wish to have him educated for the Church." The boy's own ambition was that of his mother—dead three years, at this crisis. "Born in Glasgow and educated in Aberdeen," he told the Aberdonians last year, "a man should be a match for the devil." He was no match for the devil in 1824, in his own opinion, but he was eager to prepare for the conflict, and the front rank, so far as he then saw, was composed of ministers. His tendency to the pulpit was strengthened by an incident which he never forgot. "At that period an intimate friend of my father, who used to come in

early in the evening and take a hand at cards and a glass of wine, died suddenly. I was a thoughtful youth, and naturally such a striking exhibition of the great mystery of death so close to the family fireside made me think. I became very serious, and fell, in the fashion of young men, a willing victim to the action of strong feelings and untempered imaginings, which only experience could teach me to regulate."

With his father's permission he escaped from the lawyer's office and went up to Edinburgh—"there," as he tells us, "to finish my quinquennial career of Arts by attending the logic class and second Greek in the first year and the moral philosophy in the second, to which I added chemistry: a breadth and variety of purely human culture which our Scottish Church has wisely ordained to precede the special studies that belong to the clerical profession, and which, I believe, always admitting our inferiority in the higher scholarship, renders our Scottish theologians more intelligent and more accomplished men than the young aspirants for episcopal honours in the sister kingdom."

A curious old letter lies before me, written (partly printed) by the boy of fifteen soon after his arrival in Edinburgh to the little sister Marion, then five years old, in Aberdeen. It is a sweet and simple letter, rather more serious in tone than might be expected. It begins: "*I was very glad to hear that you and James were turned such good scholars. O what good children you must be. All good children read the Good book, the Bible. But remember, MARION, that you must be a good girl, too, for if you read the Bible and be not a good girl it will be very BAD. Can Dodle read any now?*" Dodle is baby Helen; now three and a-half. Here are a few more sentences:

Since you are all such good Scholars,  
when, Christmas comes, I will buy  $\times$  books—  
*but does you turn lary, and be back  
to your good Aunt. Who is so kind as  
to teach you. I will not give you  
my books*  
Now - Marion - Does James, eat with  
a spoon, or with, a knife & Fork? -



*"There has been a great fire here which has burnt a great number of houses. What do you think will become of all the poor people who lived in them? If you were here would you not give them some money to buy a house, or to help them to buy a house? Yes, James and Marion and Dodle would all do it. . . . Good Marion! I am glad that you are a good girl. Never be bad, for I cannot love bad girls."*

In another letter, written while he was staying with his "Uncle and Aunt Gibson" at a farm in Ladhope, before the Edinburgh classes began, the young man tells of his "delicate stomach," and how severely it has made its delicacy known. "They say," however, "I am looking far more stout and healthy than when I first came out, though they were all much surprised at my 'thin bit' arms." His uncle writes in a postscript: "Dearest John is much stouter than when he came here, and he is the delight of everybody who sees him." John himself had given a delightful picture of the family circle:—"There is a continual

smile on the face of the individuals here. Every morning and every evening they shake hands together, and for the most part salute with a kiss. Indeed, Aunt Gibson kisses me *more* than twice a day, and has for me almost a mother's kindness."

Writing in March, 1826, to his Aunt Marion, the student says: "Professor Wilson is at present lecturing on the Grecian philosophy. This is a very profitable subject of contemplation. In each of these systems of morals framed by the wise men of Greece we see much to admire and much to pity." More to pity than to admire, however; for the two lessons he draws from this exercise are that we should be thankful for the clearer light we have received in the Scriptures and ashamed of the little good we have achieved by it. In the same letter he writes: "I have no expectation of a prize this winter; my studies have not been diligently pursued. I have made little progress in them. Nor could it be otherwise when the

blessing of God was not with me and I was not simply and sincerely devoting all my powers to His glory."

In fact, the young student's mind was so distracted by religious emotions and speculations that he was quite unfit for common studies. Describing this painful experience in "The Young Man," he says: "I became overwhelmingly serious after the extreme Calvinistic type native to Scotland, and began immediately an other-worldly sort of piety which interfered seriously with my enjoyment of life and with the further progress of my academical studies. To such a degree, indeed, was I puzzled and preoccupied with profound theological problems about election, reprobation, and other points of the severe Calvinistic theology, that I abstained from reading many books of approved literary excellence, because I thought they were too worldly in their tone, and not sufficiently in harmony with the spirit of reverential seriousness without which all knowledge and all cleverness merely make a man a more efficient agent of the devil. So far

did this extreme religiosity lead me that I remember well, when I went up at the end of my fifth academical year to receive my certificate of attendance from John Wilson, the Professor expressed his regret that he could not give me a testimonial of the highest kind, because, though I had written one very excellent essay during the session, I had written only one. To this I could say nothing, the true cause of my deficiency, a morbid religiosity, being so personal and peculiar; all I could do was to cover my face and burst into tears, and leave the room." One outcome of the two years at Edinburgh University—two barren years for the most part—was the warm friendship that sprang up between young Blackie and the aforesaid John Wilson, the famous "Christopher North," who was then, what Blackie afterwards became, the most noted inhabitant of the capital.

With unshaken resolve Blackie now mounted another step on the pulpit stair. Returning to Marischal College, he en-

tered in the theological faculty. He went in for his new studies with enthusiasm, and did his exercises well for the required space of three years. Long before that term was out the warmth of his heart had softened the rigidity of his creed, which afterwards took so elastic, not to say fluid, a form. The students had to write sample sermons for their professors and fellow-students to criticise. In one of his discourses Blackie let his incipient Arminianism show itself, and Dr. Mearns snubbed him severely. In criticising other men's sermons he won some college fame, not, for sure, because of his zeal in exposing doctrinal errors, but through his gift of tongues. "Principal Brown had been taught in Holland, and knew Latin very well indeed. He laid it down as a rule," Blackie tells us, "that if there was to be any criticism of the discourse it must be in Latin. I remember that I was the only one having the hardihood to criticise in Latin, and I made some little reputation as a Latin scholar."

Not long after he had plunged into the

professional study of theology, his father—who was no theologian, but a shrewd man in other matters than finance—noticed that the young man's intellectual vision was still somewhat clouded by over-seriousness, and sent him to take the advice of an equally shrewd divine, Dr. Patrick Forbes, then professor of Latin and chemistry at King's College. Here is Blackie's account of the interview, which had great results:—

“I immediately made a declaration that in dealing with a subject of so extensive a range as Christian theology I had deemed it advisable to commence with a general systematic scheme of the whole subject, and had accordingly submitted myself to the orthodox guidance of Boston's ‘Body of Divinity.’ ‘Boston! Boston! Body! Body!’ said the stout old doctor; ‘neither Boston, nor Calvin, nor any other D.D. must be allowed to stand between you and your Protestant Bible. Let them stalk about on the stilts of a scholastic dogmatism as high as they please, but you place yourself at the feet of Jesus Christ and learn

from Him directly. Take your Greek Testament, interleave it, and make notes carefully of what you read; make a vow to read no Body of Divinity for two years, and after that you will likely find that they are not worth reading.'

"I followed his instructions conscientiously," the young man adds, now old, "and have, during the whole course of a life protracted considerably beyond the usual term, known how to combine profitably and carefully the study of the original Scriptures with a total abstinence from theological systems and sectarian commentaries." A complete digest of the New Testament, in Greek, was one of the immediate results of the Professor's advice to this student, whose voracity for work, checked in its monstrous meal of Boston, was instantly let loose upon the more wholesome victual set before it. Nor was he so engrossed in professional studies that he could not find time to give the "gooders" their first lessons in botany, sitting on the banks of the Don at Caskie Ben, or to painfully print



for their instruction a long series of original Latin exercises, of which this is a specimen \* :—

Immo ~~Q~~ Cara soror, tauri sunt  
validissimi. Collaque magna habet ~~toan~~  
- nes video larvam : larva me terret ! O  
stultissima puella, nulla omnino (at all) sunt  
larvae in mundo. Ego, Margaritam ter-  
rissem ; sed Margarita timidissima est. Illam  
non terreo. Euge Euge ! io. io ! nostri fortis-  
simi milites Gallos terrecerunt. Nam Galli  
sunt timidi ; ego Galliam odi, Britanniam  
vero amavi semper, semperque amabo. Bri-  
tanniam Galliam semper terruit, Gallia vero  
Britanniam nunquam terribit.

The three years passed without a catastrophe. The potential parson managed to escape, with all his infant heresies, the utter condemnation of his professors, and was ready to emerge from his probationary chrysalis in full-blown gown and bands. "And why was I not licensed to preach? The why," he tells us, "lay in a good idea of my good father." Whether Mr. Blackie had any strong conviction that his son ought not to be a minister, or whether he

\* On a reduced scale, as with the other facsimiles.

simply wished to equip "his young theological Johnnie" more fully for his ministry, it would be hard to guess. Certain it is that Professor Forbes once more appeared in the way with a suggestion that young Blackie should go off with a pair of young Forbes's to the Continent, and add two years in a German university to the eight he had spent in Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

#### IV.

#### GERMANY AND ITALY.

THE fathers having agreed to this plan, the three sons were packed off by coach to Edinburgh, and took ship at Leith for the North Sea passage. Landing at Hamburg, they made their way to Göttingen. There they spent six months "eagerly drinking in living waters from Heeren in history, Otfried Müller in philology," and other sources. The consuming energy with which young Blackie not only set about his appointed work but created new tasks for himself considerably astonished his comrades, the elder of whom (the Rev. John Forbes, D.D., LL.D., Emeritus Professor of Oriental Languages, Aberdeen) still preserves, at the hale old age of ninety-three, a vivid recollection of the experience. To begin with, as Blackie tells us himself, he gripped, overcame, and made a friend of his first enemy, the

German language, as Jacob wrestled with the angel. "I learnt how to learn languages, not by a painful machinery of dry rules and dead books, but just as we learn to swim by plunging into the water and plashing about. It is fear that would make you sink, not the weight of your body. I did not know a single word of German when I stepped out of the Leith packet (there were no steamboats in those days) at Hamburg, but before I had been three months in Göttingen I followed Professor Heeren's lectures on history as pleasantly as if they had been in English; not," he assures us, "because I had any special gift of learning languages, but because I plashed about daily in the element and breathed the atmosphere of German."

This was only one of the "notable revelations" that were speedily made to him, and perhaps the least of a revelation, for he had learnt to speak Latin by the same fearless and natural method at home. "The next thing I learned," he continues, "was that the German univer-

sities are the model institutions of the kind, the real πανεπιστήμιον, as the Greeks phrase it, or bazaar of universal knowledge, while the Scottish Universities, except in the medical department in Edinburgh, are mere shops for retail trade in certain useful articles; and the English universities are shops of a higher order and more gentlemanly appearance, dealing only in a few select articles sought after by persons of much money and great leisure, more from a certain aristocratic tradition and respectable show than from any practical fruits which they are destined to bear." He does not tell us how soon he communicated this unpleasant discovery to his fellow countrymen, and thus flung himself into that struggle for university reform which is one of his many claims upon the national gratitude. His fellow-traveller supplies the omission. "Blackie," he says, "was very quick at picking up German; he had got a few words even as we were passing through Hamburg; he was very ready in talking to the German students, and studied the German grammar

very keenly. We soon noticed that he was busy writing—he would not say what—and at last we found that by the time we had been six weeks in Göttingen he had written an article to send home on the inferiority of the Scottish universities!" This article, the first shot in a brilliant campaign, was published in "The Edinburgh Literary Journal."

Busy as he was enlarging his own mind, and transmitting his new light to the nation he had left sitting in darkness, Blackie was no more of a recluse then than in his sunny after life. He threw himself into the life around him, joining his fellow-students in all their amusements except one. He visited the dueling-halls, though the more cautious Forbes's left him to go alone; but he would not fight, and it is not recorded that he had to knock any German down as an alternative. "As a student among students," he says, "I lived in the most intimate fellowship with the Burschen, and joined in all their studies and recreations, except that I

did not fight a duel, or come home with a scar of honourable folly on my face."

As for those unclean courses to which every young man is tempted, and into which the weaker-minded stray under various contemptible excuses, Blackie's mind was absolutely made up from the beginning. "Along with the stern theology of Calvin," he told the young men of later generations, "I got the pure morality of the Gospel, and after dropping the one, as the wisdom of life gradually taught me, I had the sense to stick closely by the other"; and so he "was preserved untouched by those sensual excesses and youthful lusts which when they once get free rein are sure to poison the fountain-head and trouble the flow of all noble emotion in the soul." No wonder that on a calm retrospect he described "the early adoption of the Bible standard of morality as by far the most valuable educative influence" in his life, or that the advantages far out-weighed the disadvantages of the "hyper-Cal-



vinistic soul-cancer" from which he had suffered.

The narrow theological shell, which we saw beginning to crack before the horrified eyes of Dr. Mearns, burst and fell off altogether under the expanding influence of German sunlike Fichte, Schiller, Richter, and Goethe. For a time he seemed to be parting from much of religion itself, along with the uncongenial forms in which he had generally met it. That he saw his mistake before his mind had time to become hardened in the extreme fashion of scepticism is probably due to his meeting with Baron von Bunsen after leaving Germany.

Meanwhile, we had better get back to Göttingen. The session passed in peace, and the three young Scotsmen agreed to begin their holidays with a walking tour in the Harz Mountains. The eldest, who was also the purse-bearer, proposed that in case of a difference of opinion (which he quite anticipated) as to future plans, a vote should be taken, and the majority should have their way. But on the first application of the new rule, when the two

brothers voted for going off to Leipzig Fair, young Blackie, resolved on seeing more of the mountains, claimed the right of secession. The Forbes's returned to Göttingen for another session, while Blackie, the Hanoverian town having disagreed with his health, made his way to Berlin. For six months he listened to "Ranke expatiating on the virtues and villainies of the Popes, Boeckh expounding the pregnant sentences of Athenian wisdom in the choral odes of Sophocles, and Neander teaching German speculation to shake hands with Hebrew Platonism in the Gospel of John." Under this rush of inspiration the young Aberdonian felt as if he was conversing with Luther, and Melanchthon, and Erasmus, "in the days when learning meant thinking and Greek meant wisdom. I likewise," he goes on to say, "had the advantage of hearing Schleiermacher, with his graceful little figure and his chaste earnestness, preaching regularly every Sunday in the Trinitäts-Kirche. With such advantages I could not fail to take the first step in true scholarship, by being made fully alive

to the smallness of my own, and indeed of all Scottish attainments in the higher learning."

The young student had found his "model thinker" in Goethe: he was now to find his "model man" in another German—but not in Germany. Blackie was happy in his relations with his teachers at both the German universities. At Göttingen old Professor Blumenbach had been very kind to him and his companions; and on leaving Berlin he received from Neander a greater boon than any course of lectures. "The greatest benefit," he says, "which I got from my twelve months' experience of German academical life was from a letter of introduction which Neander gave me, when leaving Berlin for Rome, to a great German man at that time acting as Prussian ambassador at the papal Court." With this letter in his pocket Blackie travelled through Bohemia and Austria to Rome, where he presented it to the man who was to mould so much of his nature. "Baron von Bunsen," he says, "was as learned in Greek and Latin, in Hebrew, and English, and Italian, as any professor; but

he was far more than a professor. He was a man of life and of society, and moved with dignity and grace and effect on the diplomatic stage that belonged to his position. He was, moreover, a man of piety, and, like Gladstone, of special theological study, but of a piety healthy and cheerful, and as far as possible removed from the rigid orthodoxy and the sacred gloom of the Calvinistic doctors, whose contagion had so severely affected me in my first outlook into the seriousness of responsible life." The great man was very fond of patronising and helping young men, and Blackie's fine open nature helped to ripen the acquaintance into a friendship of the warmest kind, which endured for a long series of years, in Heidelberg and London as well as Rome. "Familiar intercourse with a noble, well-rounded, and highly-cultured man is the greatest piece of good fortune that can happen to a young man in his entrance on life. This good fortune was mine," writes Blackie, recalling those old Roman days; "and I advise all men to pray for no higher blessing than the reverential and loving fellowship with

such a man, to whom they may look up daily, and grow by his gracious influence, as the flower looks up to the sun and grows with the brightness of the summer."

The fifteen months that Blackie spent in Italy are memorable also for the new fields of learning which he speedily added to his German conquests. One of these was archæology, the study of the monuments of Greek and Roman art which continually met his eyes—in the Capitol, and the Vatican, and almost at every street corner. "With this delightful study as the sister of philology," he writes, "I occupied myself so seriously that Professor Gerhard, then the leading man in the Archæological Institute at Rome, requested me to write an account of a newly-discovered sarcophagus representing a battle between Romans and barbarians. This I did to his satisfaction, using Italian, with which I was quite familiar, as the medium of expression": and the curious may still inspect in the British Museum an old brown treatise, formidably elaborate in its contents, and

bearing on the title-page these words:  
*INTORNO UN SARCOFAGO RINVENUTO NELLA  
VIGNA AMMENDOLA SULLA VIA APPIA.  
ILLUSTRAZIONE DI GIOVANNI BLACKIE.  
ROMA. 1831.*

Here was a guttural Scotsman, fresh from guttural Germany, able to speak and write in perfect Italian after a few months' experience! The spectacle is surprising enough, even when we remember his achievement at Göttingen. His method was the same in both cases—the method of nature. He learnt to speak by speaking, chatting with the Italians as he had with the Prussians, utterly careless whether he amused them or not.

It was in Italy, too, that he laid the foundation—in ground prepared by nature, to be sure—of that love of beauty which he was never tired of preaching to his fellow-countrymen. For one thing, as he spent his time chiefly in Rome and the neighbourhood, he “naturally fell into the society of artists, both German and English, and received the greatest benefit,” he tells us, “not only from the pure humanity that characterises that class,

but specially from this: they taught me to use my eyes, an exercise too often neglected in the bookish style of teaching to which too many of our modern educators have enslaved themselves."

## V.

### "STICKIT."

AT last the young traveller turned his face northwards, his boxes packed with presents for his step-mother and the rest of the Aberdeen household, and his "head full of pictures, statues, churches, and other beautiful objects." One can imagine the astonishment, not to say horror, that sermons preached under the combined inspiration of Rome and Berlin would have excited in a Scottish Presbyterian congregation sixty years ago. Happily for the peace of his Church, the young minister stuck fast on the very threshold of the pulpit. He could not conscientiously declare the creed of his Church to be the expression of his heart's belief. He was "much given to thinking, and thinking is twin sister to doubt." The absolute orthodoxy with which he had set out on his



theological career half-a-dozen years before had been "rudely shaken," not only by the great writers who have been named, but "by continued familiar intercourse with such large and liberal Christian men as Professor Neander and Baron Bunsen."

The elder Blackie was not greatly disappointed, though he must have grudged the three years his son had spent learning to be a stickit minister. Stickit he was, and there was an end of it. What remained but to re-enter the despised profession of the law, "with a side glance at literature if the Pandects and the statute books should fail"? Up to Edinburgh he went again, therefore, to supplement his ten years of college work with three of special training for the Bar. "My father," he says, "with his old liberality, promised to give me an allowance of £100 for three years, and after that I was to shift for myself. I knew he was a man of his word, so I set my face to the writer's desk and the Institutes," studying hard, and taking part in the debates of the Speculative and Juridical Societies, "and

bravely passed as advocate on the usual presentation of a Latin thesis and examination in the general outlines of Scottish law."

Thus it came to pass that in 1834 John Stuart Blackie was called to the Bar, and went on circuit with the rest of the budding chancellors. There is a legend that he had one case, and lost it. A diligent Aberdeen journalist\* has unearthed enough of the ancient records of his town to show that Blackie had "a fairly busy time of it" when the Court sat there in the autumn of '34. A local paper reported his first case in this little paragraph:—

"Alexander Watt, a boy apparently ten or eleven years of age, was placed at the bar charged with theft, and two previous convictions. Panel pleaded guilty; and the Advocate-Depute having restricted the libel, Mr. J. S. Blackie urged in mitigation that the boy had been driven from home by the conduct of a drunken father. Lord Medwyn, after a serious advice to the panel as to

\* See "The Evening Gazette," March 16, 1895.

his future behaviour, sentenced him to twelve months' imprisonment in Bridewell."

A friend who went to court especially to hear the most important of the cases entrusted to the young advocate tells me that it was "something to do with a cat." This must have been the case in which, as appears from the scanty reports of the period, a certain William Walls was charged with having, "at or near the door of the dwelling-house upon the farm of Dencadlie, or Dencallie, parish of Strichen, then occupied by him," shot Mr. "John Forsyth, farmer, residing at Greens, in said parish, with a gun, whereby the said Forsyth was severely wounded, to the injury of his person and the effusion of blood, with intent to murder, maim, disfigure or disable him. Mr. J. S. Blackie," we are informed, "made a forcible appeal to the jury on behalf of the prisoner, contending that he had fired at the cat, and not at Forsyth." The judge, however, "felt that his sense of justice would not allow him to pass any other sentence than that next to the highest punishment

of the law, namely, that of transportation for life."

One other case, perhaps the most notable of all that came into his hands, may be mentioned because of its connection with the politics of sixty years ago. Alexander Blackie was an advanced Whig—he had been one of the chief speakers at a great Reform demonstration on the Broad Hill in 1832; and later on, when Whiggery as a whole was rather shy of Free Trade, Alexander Blackie was one of the few prominent Aberdonians who showed themselves on the platform with Richard Cobden. John Stuart, as his father's son, and as (at this time) a Radical himself, was asked to defend two indiscreet members of the party from the charge of mobbing and rioting on the occasion of a public dinner at Banff. When he was cross-examining some of the Crown witnesses, "Mr. Blackie was asked what he intended to prove. He stated that he wished to show who were the parties who commenced the riot. The mob, he said, was not, as had been said, a many-sided monster, but a monster all heart and no

head. He wished to know what it was which brought these countrymen, this junta, these self-constituted police" (the anti-mob, in short) "into the town. Lord Medwyn said the counsel was endeavouring to turn the case into a political affair. Mr. Blackie denied that he had endeavoured to do so. He had never mentioned the words Whig or Tory. The counsel for the other panels had spoken of cheers given for Colonel Hay. He (Mr. Blackie) might, if he had been willing, have spoken of groans given for Mr. Brodie. (Laughter.) Lord Medwyn said, if Mr. Blackie's client had confined himself to cheers for one party or groans for another, there could have been no objection at all to his conduct. There was nothing wrong in such ebullitions of feeling. But, alas, he had not confined himself to cheers and groans, but had proceeded to blows." Mr. Blackie "addressed the jury at considerable length"—a few extracts from that speech would have been welcome—"maintaining that no case had been made out by the prosecution." One of the prisoners was discharged; the other, a

young lad, though convicted only of assault, and recommended to mercy by the jury, was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment. The Whigs did not let the matter drop there; and Lord Medwyn was charged by the local party paper with having sent Blackie's client to gaol "to propitiate the deity of appearances."

This was in the autumn of 1835. It is the only record which has preserved for us a single incident characteristic of the young lawyer who afterwards for many years enjoyed the honour of verbatim reports. In the absence of knowledge to the contrary, a belief has grown up that Blackie invariably succeeded in obtaining verdicts of "guilty" and extra heavy sentences for his clients. So, at any rate, said Blackie's friend Dr. Kilgour, at a farewell banquet given to the Professor in 1852. The facetious physician could scarcely foresee that his remark would travel over the world for half-a-century, or he would have attached the label, "This is a joke." It is quite undeniable, however, that Blackie did not win that speedy success which might have con-

quered his old dislike for the law. "The lawyers had a notion," he once said, "that I had too much German, and that I had not a business head, which perhaps was true." His fees were "almost null." To be sure, this troubled him little. He used to entertain the convivial gatherings of his friends by laughing at himself in song. We can imagine the shout that went round the table when Blackie rose to sing:—

GIVE A FEE.

A NEW SONG FOR YOUNG BARRISTERS.

(Air: "Buy a Broom.")

O listen, of Scotch and of civil law doctors all,  
Solicitors, agents, accountants, to me!  
O listen, of strifes and of lawsuits concoctors all,  
And give to a poor starving lawyer a fee!  
Give a fee! give a fee! give a fee! give a  
fee!  
O give to a poor starving lawyer a fee!

Happily, he had a second string to his bow. Indeed, Literature was his first string, and Law only the second. While studying conscientiously, but without ambition or affection, for the Bar, his pen was brisk and

busy at the work he loved. Before the three years were ended, he was making £100 a year, independently of the paternal aid, by writing articles in "Tait" and "Blackwood" and the "Foreign Quarterly Review"; and he went diligently on with his literary career while practising at the Bar. His subjects were largely German; and, while he profited by the wave of interest in German literature which Carlyle raised, Blackie's own efforts did much to keep the billow rolling. He was the first, as Dr. Kirchner has recently reminded us,\* to introduce "Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe" to the British public, by an article in the "Foreign Quarterly"; and Blackie's first book, published in the year that saw its author's futile call to the Bar, was a translation of Goethe's Faust. This was a bold attempt for a young poet; but Blackie had drunk so deeply of his author's spirit that Goethe's biographer, George Henry Lewes, preferred his translation to any other, and usually followed it. "In general tone and effect,"

\* In the "Illustrirte Zeitung."



Blackie writes in his preface, "I have carefully followed the movement of the original. To have done otherwise, indeed, would have been difficult for me, to whom the movement of the original, in all its changes, has long been as familiar as the responses of the Church service to a devout Episcopalian." Nevertheless, the translator was not over confident in his own power for such a great work, and he gladly accepted the help of "Christopher North"—who corrected rhymes which would have been correct in Aberdeen—of Sir William Hamilton and Mr. George Moir (the "Delta" of "Blackwood") in revising the proofs and collecting material for the very curious notes on the witchcraft and astrology of the Middle Ages. The translation was reprinted, after being largely rewritten, in 1880.

With his reputation as a German scholar lifted higher than ever by this book, Blackie gained in favour with the editors. He reviewed German books, expounded—in the "Westminster Review"—the Prussian constitution, and wrote what is considered one of the clearest mili-

tary monographs, describing Napoleon's Leipzig Campaign." This last, and several kindred articles, were intended to form part of a work on the Liberation War in Germany, for which Blackie collected large materials at a time when Providence had not yet marked out for him "a less genial but more useful sphere of action." Another great plan of his was that of "a large work on æsthetical philosophy." The complete scheme of this work was drawn up when he was fresh from the beauties of Italy; but, "being convinced afterwards that the British mind is remarkably intolerant of big books on theoretical subjects," he allowed the project to drop. Many years afterwards, as we shall see, he revived the subject in a form which the British mind was delighted to tolerate.

Two momentary glimpses will show Blackie as the affectionate brother in the midst of his legal and literary struggles. In 1834 we see him taking his little sister Helen through the streets and over the hills of Edinburgh, on her first visit to the Capital, and—a professor already by nature

—so instilling the principles of botany and architecture that they have not been forgotten in sixty years. In 1835 he is off on a walking tour in the Border country, and sending his sister a description, in 300 lines of verse crowded on a single sheet, of what he had seen and done. Let us make room for just this scrap of doggerel:—

O how I swilled the cups of tea !  
 Much better, I vow, than wine they be !  
 Much better when tongues are parched with  
     heat,  
 With empty stomachs and weary feet ;  
 I swilled the cups, full three times three,  
 Of darkest Inverleithen tea ;  
 Dark as the sea when tempest-tost,  
 Dark as the whiskers of my host.

For six years Blackie went on with his reviewing, and more casually with his pleading ; but neither the editors nor the prisoners could supply him with the niche he was made to fill. "I was now thirty years old," he says, "and, having no special genius for law, must have drifted into the wide field of general literature, with a fair chance of making shipwreck,

as I am by nature and habit too much of a severe, systematic student to make a living by the graceful playfulness of a writer in magazines, or the pugilistic dexterity of the politician."

## VI.

### THE FIGHT FOR THE CHAIR.

By the irony of events, it was the "dexterity of the politician" that opened a new career to the stickit lawyer. "A happy combination of personal merit in the travelled scholar and paternal influence in the world of patronage led to my appointment as Professor of Latin in the newly-created chair in the Marischal College, Aberdeen."

Before this there had been no chair of Latin (or Humanity, as the Scotch phrase goes) in Marischal College, though lectures on Latin were given to the students by Dr. Melvin, rector of the Grammar School. On the 1st of May, 1839, the Home Secretary signed a decree at once establishing such a chair, and appointing John Stuart Blackie to fill it. This was brought about by the influence of the Whig Member of Parliament for the city, Mr. Alexander

Bannerman. The chair was wanted—no doubt about that—and in obtaining it from the Government Mr. Bannerman acted as a friend of his constituents; but in getting the new place for Blackie before any one else knew there was a place to apply for, the M.P. acted as a friend of one particular constituent, Alexander Blackie—one of Bannerman's chief supporters and most intimate friends. However, it is as well to remember that the politician's recommendation was strongly endorsed by high educational authorities.

The wrath of the Tories at the perpetration of a "political job" by another party was deep and furious. We shake our heads over the lapse of journalism into personalities; but we may pluck up heart when we read the personalities of our predecessors. Imagine the bitterness of party feeling that could inspire an editor with language like this:—"the absurdly-ridiculous appointment of Master John Blackie, *alias* Faust; a boy in common-sense, a very child in talents, a very infant of the classics, a very fool

when labouring on the circuit in his profession." "He has a professorship made up for him, gets a gown put over his back instead of a child's frock and pinafore, with £300 a-year"—the salary was really £200—"and his fees instead of a bawbee to buy gibbery\*!" Angry Tories apart, there was a widespread though ill-informed opinion that the new chair should have been given to Melvin, a man who had explored every microscopical nook and cranny in the whole Latin language, who had in his library as many editions of Horace as there were days in the year, and who had become, as Blackie himself said, "one of the most accurate and elegant Latinists in the country." Thirteen years later, when Blackie left Aberdeen and the Tories were in power, Melvin's appointment to the vacant chair was taken for granted by everyone—except the Government, who appointed somebody else. "Wounded in the house of his friends," the Grammar School rector died in the following year.

Melvin or no Melvin, Tories or no

\* Gingerbread.

Tories, the decree lay there in black and white with "John Russell" at the foot, and in the natural course of events the "lucky son of a Whig father" should at once have assumed the title by which the last two generations have known him. But the natural course of events was not the road Blackie's affairs were in the habit of travelling. Like a fairy-tale prince caught in an enchanted forest, twice he had struggled towards apparent outlets only to find himself back in the middle of the wood; and now, as the open world lay just before him, the way out was a third time barred.

The event that has now to be set down made a great noise at the time and is famous still. It marks a distinct and permanent gain in the struggle for religious liberty. At that time, before a professor could begin his work he had to produce to the University Senate a certificate from the Aberdeen Presbytery—ministers and elders of the Established Church—that he had signed the Westminster Confession. Now Blackie's opinion of creeds and tests was



pretty well known, for he had expressed it vigorously enough in Aberdeen three years before, when speaking on liberty of thought at a great Whig banquet. The Aberdonian Tories thought they had him now. They were loudly anxious to know what he was going to do about the creed and test that stood between him and a professorship.

Blackie was equal to the emergency. On July 2nd the reverend assembly met; the Confession was produced, full-length—and the young heretic signed it, saying as he did so, “I have signed not as my private confession of faith, nor as a churchman learned in theology, but in my public profession and capacity, and in reference to university offices and duties merely. I am a warm friend of the Church of Scotland, and I have been accustomed to worship according to the Presbyterian form, and will continue to do so; but I am not sufficiently learned in theology to be able to decide on many articles of the confession of faith.”

In answer to the remark of a presbyter that they had nothing to do with any

mental reservations, the young professor warmly declared that he had no mental reservations whatever. He had said what he had in justice to the Presbytery as well as to himself. Let them now, if they were dissatisfied, proceed to evict him from the chair. To ensure an accurate report of what had occurred, Blackie sent to a local newspaper a letter in which he gave the exact words of his declaration, and added: "I hold that in law a non-theological professor is not subject to the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church. He signs the articles as articles of peace only." In this case they proved articles of war. The Presbytery, doubtless after some inward wrestlings, decided to send the necessary certificate of signature to the University Senate. On this an editorial marplot raised a storm of outraged orthodoxy in his newspaper, and a dozen elders, representing as many parishes, petitioned the Presbytery to reverse its decision in view of the "great injury to the Protestant religion" that Mr. Blackie's admission, under the circumstances, would cause. The Presbytery

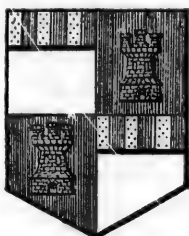
took fright, met again on the 3rd of September, and decided to undo, if possible, what they had done. A written statement was handed in from Mr. Blackie, supplementing his previous declaration, and respectfully disputing the power of the Presbytery to recall or suspend his certificate; but "this explanation" was thrown aside as "not satisfactory," only two members daring to dissent. The Senate would have disregarded the Presbytery's second thoughts and inducted the new professor to his chair, having no stomach for a fight in the law-courts; but by this time the courage of the Presbyters had been screwed up to the requisite degree of obstinacy, and they took all the risk on their own shoulders. The question was fought out in the courts, the Presbytery was declared to have no power to do more than witness and certify to the signature, as Blackie had claimed from the outset, and the Presbyters had to pay their costs out of their individual pockets, to the great disgust of the dissentient pair. The judgment was a long time in coming, and two years had gone

since his nominal appointment before the dangerous young advocate could abandon his Edinburgh lodgings and introduce himself as "Professor Blackie" to the lads of Marischal College. Out of the wood at last!

It was the Aberdeen Presbytery, by-the-bye, that tried a fall with the celebrated Dr. Kidd nearly twenty years before, and came to sudden grief, supplying Mr. Stark with one of the best stories in his Life of the pugnacious parson. Dr. Kidd was one of the few Established clergy who disobeyed the order to cease praying for Queen Caroline. The Presbytery met to reprimand him. "Why," he asked, "should the Queen not be prayed for?" One of them answered, "She is a bad woman, Dr. Kidd." "Then," replied the Doctor, with flashing eyes, "she has the more need to be prayed for. I have prayed for the Queen, I will pray for the Queen, and"—looking his ecclesiastical superiors one by one in the face, "I'll pray for you, and you, and you, and for any other sinner out of hell!" and off he marched.

## VII.

### PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY.



ARMS OF MARISCHAL  
COLLEGE.

It was clear enough now that the right man had got the Latin chair. "Happy, indeed," says one of his Aberdeen pupils,\* "was the student who, thoroughly taught by Melvin, impregnated with the principles of the Latin grammar, and more or less master of its idiom, now found himself in the hands of a professor who opened up to him the literature of the language and led him along its flowery paths. To supplement the minute verbal accuracy of Melvin, we now got the fuller freedom of Blackie, and were encouraged to use the language in speech, even in thought. The stiffness of our translations from Latin

\* Dr. John F. White, in "Alma Mater," June 5, 1895; slightly condensed.

gave place to better English, though no evasion of the meaning of the text was allowed and a 'crib' was speedily detected. To read copiously, to master the spirit of an author, to connect it with the thought of other literatures, Greek, Italian, German, or English, was his aim in guiding our work. From him we got some idea of philology, of history, and of geography, in their widest sense. Doubtless many students left his class without large additions to their knowledge of Latin, but many of those who took advantage of his inspiring teaching have admitted that he was the most stimulating of professors. "The influence of Blackie," writes Dr. Peter Bayne, after a lapse of nearly fifty years, "was for me a sunrise of the soul in admiration, wonder, sympathy, esteem, and love, and its colours were never fresher or brighter than at this hour." Dr. White continues:—

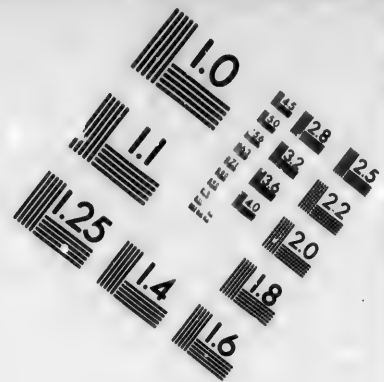
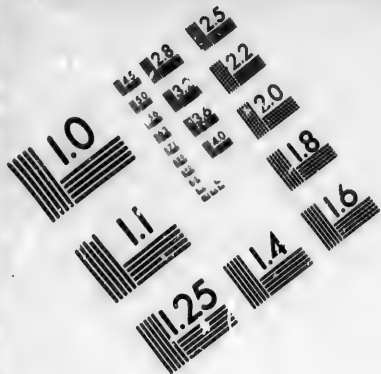
"After his two years' struggle with the Presbytery, in which his victory led the way to the abolition of tests in the lay chairs, attempts were made to introduce disorder in the class. But, by his good

nature and his cutting wit, he soon mastered the turbulent element, and by my year, '43-'44, an easy, natural good behaviour was the rule. He was loved, and this love got him respect. He was, of course, fond of jokes and of extreme

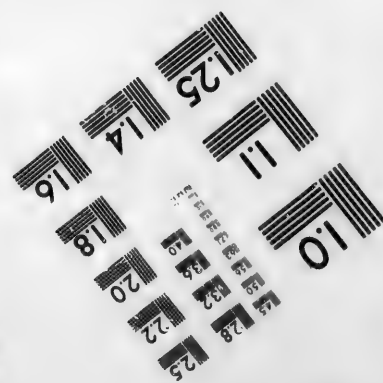
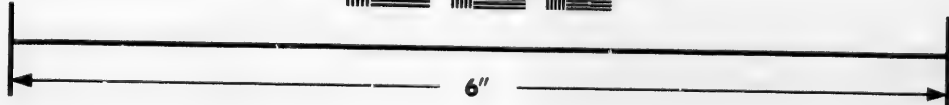
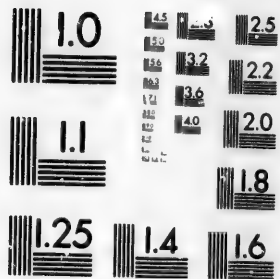


MARISCHAL COLLEGE IN 1841.

statements which caused a laugh; but the class went on sweetly and merrily, busily at work, perfectly under control, a class entirely different from any other in the ease of its manner. Bright and sympathetic, playful yet earnest, he gained our hearts by the absence of all pedantry and



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by his large humanity. Devoted to books, but not a bookworm, a student of life as well as of literature, he was our companion and guide rather than our master. History, philosophy, and poetry charmed him, but the love of nature seemed his passion. He glowed with eloquence as he spoke of the mountains and rivers of Scotland, of the heather and the bracken, so dear to his heart. And on the prize-giving day, when, in violation of the established order of things, he filled his platform with ladies, he declaimed his verses, pithily describing the students by name"—like this, happily preserved from the same year by another hand :—

Davidson, mantling with the poet's crimson,  
Though forced last year to bow the head to  
Simpson.

The steady Smith, the brisk mercurial White,  
The calm Machray, the good and gentle Knight,  
Stanley, and Stevenson, and Stoddart—he  
May shine elsewhere; he never shone with me!  
Wee Wattie, William Thomson, and James Hill,  
Chalmers, and Sackville, who with ready skill  
And classic grace plies his pictorial manum  
To furnish the Museum Blackianum.

He had been caught caricaturing his

professor, perhaps. The teachers were immortalised along with the taught,—

The ponderous Clark, the light and nimble Bain, Blackie, whose will the devil could not bend, And Brown, the students' father and their friend

Ending "always with a summons to throw away dusty books and betake ourselves to the hills and streams of our own land. Who could fail to love such a man?"

It was not only his natural sympathy with the young that made Blackie their "companion rather than master." The coldness and formality of Aberdeen society, frozen several degrees harder by the political and theological and Melvinian prejudices aroused at the time of his appointment, made him feel that while he knew "everybody in Aberdeen" externally, "internally" he knew next to no one. "I therefore," he says, "very naturally kept myself within the hedge of my own academic garden, and made friends and companions of the boys, since the men everywhere seemed to eye me either with suspicion or indifference." His contact

with the students was "not confined to the class-room, but carried"—in Dr. White's time—"into the Saturday readings at his house, when, after work done, he delighted us by singing German songs, and by his genial gaiety." Like some of the other professors, he used to invite batches of the students to breakfast on Saturday mornings. "That a profound philosopher," Blackie wrote many years afterwards, thinking not of himself but of Heraclitus, "who despised the shallow thinkers about him, should prefer playing at astragals with a boy, is quite natural and stands in tradition."

Looking back from the shores of Lake Michigan, in 1895, to the banks of the Dee in 1851, another of "Blackie's boys" says: "The Professor allowed great freedom in the way of applause in his class, and once in a while, when it became too demonstrative, he would say, 'Now, you must not make so much noise, or Dr. Cruickshank'—whose class was across the corridor—'will be saying, "That fellow Blackie does not know how to keep his class in order."' He seemed to thoroughly

believe that 'boys will be boys,' and never criticised the snowball fights that used to take place in the quadrangle, but rather seemed to enter into the spirit of all the youthful capers of the students. Every week or two," perhaps not quite so often, "on Saturday, he had what he called a *dies poetica*, when those students who were poetically inclined could bring their contributions and read them before the Professor and the class and such visitors as the Professor might invite. On these occasions Mrs. Blackie very often attended, and entered into the spirit of the occasion." The same writer tells how a friend, when the Professor had given up his house and was lodging in the new town, called one day on the landlady. The visitor was dismayed to hear a tempest of oratory in a foreign tongue raging apparently in an upper room. "Is that a madman in the house?" "O no," said the landlady, "it's only Mr. Blackie reciting some of his pieces."

After forty years' experience of it Blackie could describe the work of a Scottish academical teacher as "the happiest of

human avocations"; but the happiness was tempered for many years by some of the absurd conditions under which the work had to be carried on. He touched on the worst of these when telling how he himself went to college at the age of twelve. Nominally a University professor, and eager to do the work of a University—the work of education in its highest and broadest aspect—he was confronted with rows of boys who should have spent several more years at school, and he had to grovel in the weak and beggarly elements for their sake. In one of his earliest lectures, by the way, Blackie happened to make some assertion on the authority of Grimm, the great German philologist: "but I suppose you never heard of Grimm," he added, in the bitterness of his soul. To his great astonishment the whole class claimed to know Grimm intimately, and laughed as if someone had made a joke. It turned out that "Grim"—"Grim Pluto"—was the boys' nickname for the Grammar School rector. Even those who had got their grammar from Melvin had often been

"stupefied with too much of it." Taking the lads as a whole, their range of Latin reading had been so scanty and formal that the Professor had to devote his whole strength to reading a few select authors with them, not more than fifty lines a day, "with as much seasoning of human sympathy and intellectual outlook as possible: but anything like a systematic treatment of Roman history, Roman policy, Roman literature, Roman archæology, not to mention the higher philology in all its branches, such as would have been the staple of a Latin class in a German University, was not to be dreamt of." We may guess the sharpness of the pang he suffered when letters came from his masters of higher learning in Berlin reproaching him with having "abandoned those refined studies of classical archæology" of which he "had given some creditable promise on the banks of the Tiber." Most men would just have groaned and gone on, doing perhaps their best under the conditions that had disabled their academical ancestors. Blackie set about getting the conditions altered.

“Χαλεπὰ τὰ καλὰ” was one of the mottoes he lived by; “difficult things, in fact, are the only things worth doing, and they are done by a determined will and a strong hand.”

He succeeded in getting his own would-be pupils classified and sifted by an entrance examination; and he besieged the ear of his country with demands for a general and generous reform of her educational machinery. He began these public appeals in 1846—if we except the precocious Göttingen article—with a “Letter to the Citizens of Aberdeen,” and “An Appeal to the People of Scotland” later in the year. In 1848 he published his “University Reform,” reprinting from the “Scotsman” a series of articles to which Professor Pillans had taken exception, with an open letter to that gentleman by way of postscript. His denunciation of the degradation of the Universities to the level of schools, his war against tests, his advocacy of an efficient High School system with properly paid teachers, found support at first only in the wise minority. “He was in advance of his time, and was



met by the cry of 'Flibberti-gibbet' and 'Will o' the Wisp,' as Dr. White says; but "Blackie did not trouble himself with the outpourings of ill-natured talk, to which he was supremely indifferent. He did not even despise them, but said, with a smile, 'These people know nothing about it.'"

He spoke as well as wrote on this burning question—of which most men only see the smoke, and think an educational topic must be dull because they were educated in a dull way—and among his lectures at this period must be mentioned the course he gave before crowded audiences at the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution in 1847. A curious letter written in the previous year shows him hammering away at a smaller problem in the management of his own university, and becoming as nearly cynical as it was possible for him to be:—"I am at present busy with the Bursary test in the *Senatus Academicus*; but with such a pedant as A, such a formalist as B, such a coward as C, and such ninnies as D and E and F, to deal with, I shall have a hard fight. However,

it is not improbable I may beat them, if G and H have not altogether deceived me. At the same time I look for bareness, and nothing but bareness, as the common state of all corporations. I am in danger, indeed, of becoming altogether a misanthrope." He did beat them, but by slow degrees and not as thoroughly as he would have liked. Hitherto the bursaries had been granted on ridiculous terms: the competitors simply had to turn one piece of English into Latin. In 1846 the Senatus consented to add a Latin passage for translation into English, in 1849 Greek was introduced, and in 1851 arithmetic!

It was characteristic of the man that while struggling for the distant ideal he never neglected the duty of the hour. In a letter to his sister in London, in 1846, we see him constantly trying to improve his own method of teaching, and also "to excite a taste for reading among the lads." In the same Aberdeen letter we get our first introduction to a "lad" who is now Principal of the sister university at St. Andrews:—"Your husband's young friend Donaldson, by the way, stands among my

best, and I gave him a small book the other day (the Life of Luther) in token of my approbation." One thing that Blackie did to encourage reading was to start a class library, in this following the example of a colleague, Professor Martin. The curious fact has been noticed, by the way, that while Blackie was a professor in one class he was a student in three; and Martin's was one of these. "I have nothing to report to you," Blackie writes to an ex-Aberdonian in '46, "of the doings of this Laodicea which would give pleasure to your soul, except, perhaps, that Professor Martin is going on triumphantly with his moral philosophy class, and exciting a rare spirit of speculation and study among the boys. I attend his lectures, and think a class could not possibly be better conducted." The other two professors who used to find their colleague occasionally on the benches before them were Macgillivray, the geologist, and Gray, whose problems in natural philosophy Blackie used to work out afterwards with less circumlocution by drawing diagrams on the gravel with his stick.

Within a year or two of his settlement at the college Blackie announced a course of Latin lectures on the Reformation, and invited the ministers of the town, and any one else who could understand, to his class-room. The invitation was well responded to, and the lectures excited much interest. One of the ministers who went to them says he was surprised to find how easily he could follow the speaker. "In his lips Latin seemed a real and living language, not the dead thing we had been given at school. Blackie's pronunciation, accentuation and whole delivery made every lecture a great treat." His Latin was all alive, whether tripping off his tongue or flowing from his pen. Witness the Latin section of his book of "Lyrical Poems"; the rollicking students' song of 1848, with its puns on his own name and that of the paternal Brown—

FUSCO salus ! Salus NIGELLO !

and the Latin version of John Gilpin :—

Londini clarus clara vivebat in urbe  
Civis, et urbanæ dux quoque militiæ  
Gilpinus ;

following the Romanised old rider all the way to Ware and home again :—

Urgo cantemus felicia tempora regi !  
Et Gilpine fluant tempora læta tibi !  
Et quandoque voles tantos iterare volatus  
Illa contingat me quoque adesse die !

Much as he loved Latin, he loved Greek more. His lectures before the Aberdeen Philosophical Society (and he gave one nearly every year) dealt with "The Theology of the Greeks," and "The Genius and Character of the Modern Greek Language," as well as such subjects as "The Theory of the Beautiful," "The Rhythmical Declamation of the Ancients," and "The Agrarian Laws of the Romans." He even began to communicate his ideas on Greek as a living language to his Latin class, and to read them scraps from an Athenian newspaper to which he had already become a subscriber.

In 1848 Blackie and a few other members of his university, dissatisfied with the "extremely low level" at which the knowledge of Greek literature was standing in Scotland, began meeting together once a week and reading continuously

through some classical author. Homer's Odyssey occupied one session, his Iliad the next; and then the enthusiastic little group resolved to give "a more permanent form to their meetings, under the name of the Hellenic Society," with Blackie as constitution-maker and president. The society was organised on the 16th of March, 1850, with two kinds of members—the ordinary, or *ἑταῖροι*, who should "honestly go through the whole readings of the session," and the "sworn brethren," or *ἀδελφοὶ συνωμόται*, who were bound not only to investigate Greek literature and antiquities during every vacation for the benefit of the society in the following session, but "to consider the advancement of Greek literature in Scotland as their special duty." The original list of sworn brethren was short and notable enough: "John S. Blackie; William D. Geddes, A.M.," now Principal of Aberdeen University; "Robert Angus, A.M.; James Donaldson, A.M." Dr. White, who was one of the five *ἑταῖροι*, says: "Without doubt it was the Hellenic Society of Aberdeen that contributed

largely to the wave of Greek scholarship which was to spread over the North for the next forty years, and of which the force is not yet spent, in spite of the depressing influences of recent University legislation." We shall hear more of Hellenic Society meetings when we get to Edinburgh. Meanwhile, the president had been busy for years on a work that showed him practising the higher scholarship he preached. This was a poetical version of the Lyrical Dramas of Æschylus: as bold an attempt as the translation of Faust, and even more successful. He did not hide the difficulties from himself. To give an English facsimile was impossible. "Like a practised posture-maker, or expert ballet-dancer, the old Hellenic dialect can caper gracefully through movements that, if attempted, would twist our English tongue into distortion or dislocation." On the other hand, a translator had no right "by every sort of fine flourishing and delicate furbishment to obscure or to blot out what was most characteristic" in the original. "The proper problem of an English translator is not how to say a

thing as the author would have said it had he been an Englishman; but how, through the medium of the English language, to make the English reader feel both what he said and how he said it, being a Greek." This Blackie aimed at doing; and the translation, with an essay "On the Genius and Character of the Greek Tragedy," and notes profoundly learned but always interesting and suggestive, came out in 1850, with a dedication "To his Excellency the Chevalier Bunsen, and to Edward Gerhard, Royal Archæologist, Berlin, the friends of his youth and the directors of his early studies."



## VIII.

### EXCURSIONS.

THIS crowning achievement of his Aberdeen career did as much as anything else to bring that career to an end. But we must accompany the professor on several excursions before going with him to Edinburgh. First, and most important of all, to Gilston in Fife, where lived his mother's cousin, the wife of Mr. James Wyld—a Leith wine merchant and a director of the Commercial Bank. John Stuart Blackie had resolved to have Eliza Wyld for his wife, and Eliza Wyld, being a woman of insight, had no difficulty in resolving to have John Stuart Blackie for her husband, in spite of her family's objections to his unconventional ways and opinions and perhaps also the slenderness of his financial prospects. The stories of a "runaway marriage" are unfounded, unless this circumstance be

reckoned a foundation: that the spirited maiden went to stay with her relations in Edinburgh when she could stop the domestic dissuasions in no other way. The victory was won, and on the 19th of April, 1842, the family gathered harmoniously at the wedding. Mr. (now Sir) Theodore Martin, who had long been and ever continued one of the bridegroom's warmest friends, was among the wedding guests. It was on his wedding tour, by the banks of the Tweed, that Blackie composed that noble song of praise to the Creator, "Angels holy, high and lowly," which appeared fifteen years later in the "Lays and Legends," and has since found its way into the hymn-books:—

Ocean hoary,  
Tell His glory;  
Cliffs where tumbling seas have roared,  
Pulse of waters blithely beating,  
Wave advancing, wave retreating,  
Praise ye, praise ye, God the Lord!

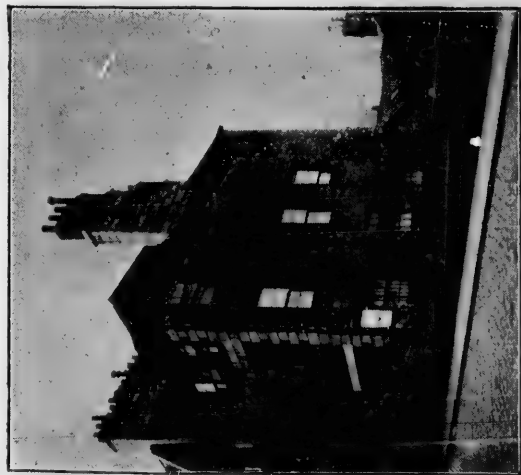
In reverent joy like this John Stuart Blackie began a companionship which lasted, with a happiness equally lasting,

for more than half-a-century. "Domestic life," as he wrote a few years ago to a young friend about to marry, "is not a rose without a thorn; thorns are everywhere, but they can always be made harmless by delicate handling and nice tact. In fact, I should be inclined to say marriage is the only good school of a loving and discriminating toleration—toleration of the merely negative kind, which plays a part in political history, being rather the absence of a vice than the presence of a virtue;" with this for the other young person concerned: "It is always more easy to gain a man's heart than to keep it. It is gained by the charm of the moment: it is kept by the wisdom of the life."

To his cottage on Dee Street, where his sister Helen had hitherto kept house for him, Blackie led his bride from the banks of the Tweed. Not long afterwards, however, he took a house in Old Aberdeen, close to the rival University of King's College—now 113, High Street, just over the way from the Town House, if any visitor would like to see the actual walls

which appear on the opposite page. In this house the *Æschylus* was written and the Hellenic Society projected. In this house, most likely, occurred a little incident that the Professor related many years afterwards to Dr. Donald Macleod, with whom he often stayed when lecturing in Glasgow.

"Whatever other faults I have," said Blackie to his host, during one of these visits, "I am free from vanity." "An incredulous smile on my face roused him," says Dr. Macleod. "'You don't believe that; give me an instance.' Being thus challenged, I said, 'Why do you walk about flourishing a plaid continually?' 'I'll give you the history of that, sir. When I was a poor man, and when my wife and I had our difficulties, she one day drew my attention to the threadbare character of my surtout, and asked me to order a new one. I told her I could not afford it just then; when she went, like a noble woman, and put her own plaid shawl on my shoulders, and I have worn a plaid ever since in memory of her loving deed.'"

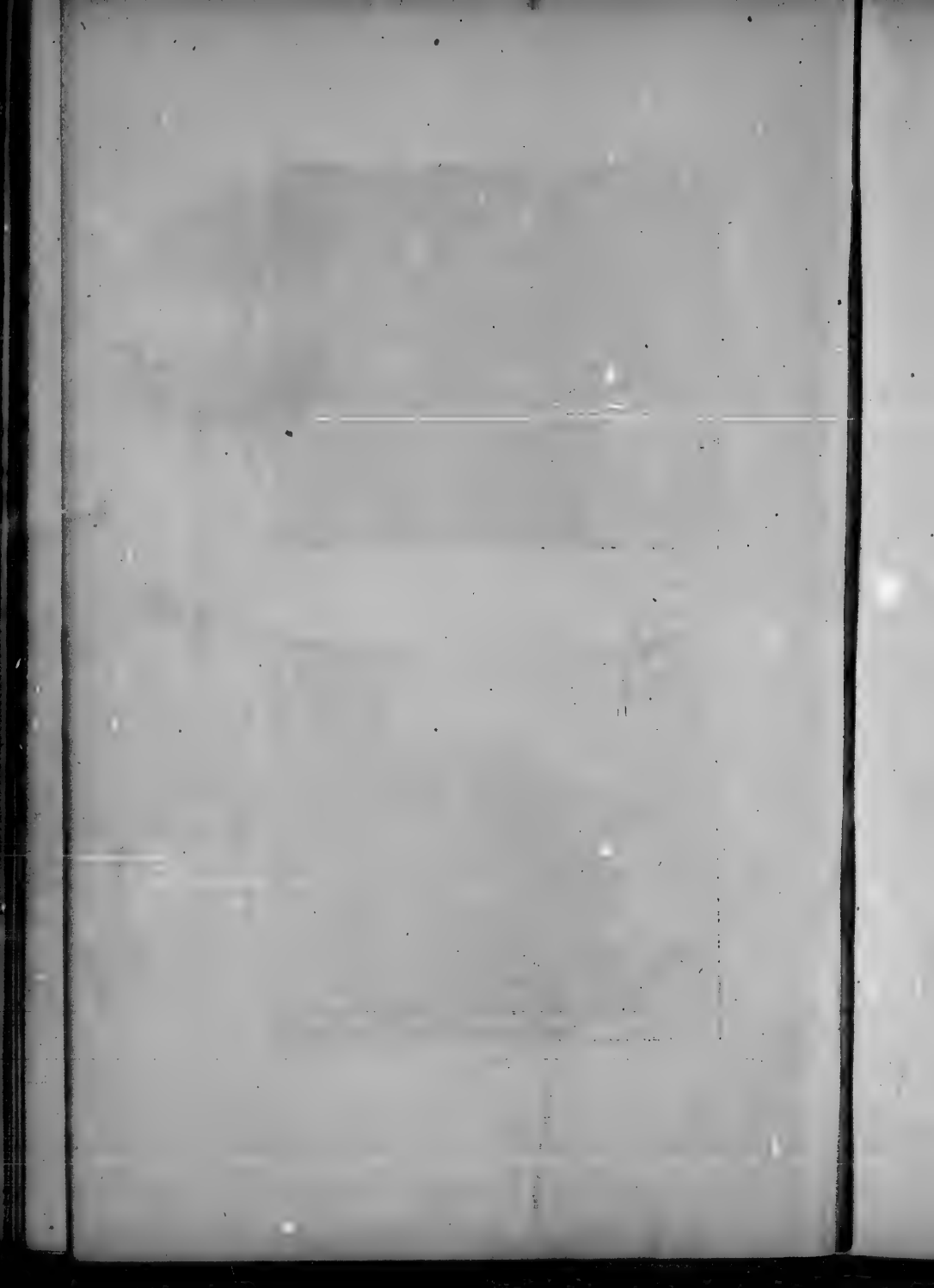


THE OLD BANK, MARISCHAL STREET.



HIGH STREET, OLD ABERDEEN.

THE ABERDEEN HOMES OF JOHN STUART BLACKIE.



To get anything like a complete idea of how Blackie spent his Aberdeen years, we must realise that he passed at least a part of every summer exploring his native land. Soon after his return from Germany, indeed, he made a vow that he would visit some new district of Scotland every year. This vow he conscientiously kept, travelling as much as possible on his own legs, neither fearing the rain nor shunning the mist, that he might get to thoroughly know what the tourist only sees. Thus we hear of him climbing Lochnagar with "Mrs. Oke"—*ὠκεῖα*, "the swift"—as he playfully called his bride, "singing songs and dancing Celtic dances" on the top; or "hospitably entertained by a shepherd in a bothie, at the south-west end of Loch Etive"; spending "many happy days on the banks of beautiful Loch Lomond, in solitary musing, or in company with sagacious old Celts or keen-eyed professors of science." We see him sailing in and out of the Western Archipelago, and landing on the sacred isle of Iona; "rambling over every quaint crag and down into every clear pebbly creek," while "in

the evening, looking out from the inn window on the lofty peaks of Jura, and the red granite slabs of the coast of Mull glowing in the rays of the setting sun," he "pondered over the old Latin book containing the life of the great local saint." And coming back to the mainland, we share his indignant gusto as he defies the gamekeepers to keep him off the mountains. "That magnificent Ben, the Buachaill Etive (the shepherd of Etive)," he tells us,\* "is by no means difficult to climb if you assail it, as I did, from the western side, and are not to be deterred from your purpose by a threatened action of damages from any gentleman who may assert that the wild mountains in this part of the world belong to him exclusively and to his gamekeeper. I have been threatened by these gentlemen more than once in my wanderings, but I have given them an answer simply, as I advise you to do, by walking straightforward, even though it should lead to jumping a dyke, as a distinguished professor of botany is celebrated to have done in Glen Tilt."

\* Lays of the Highlands and Islands.



Here is Blackie's story of one of these encounters : "On coming back to the inn at Kingshouse, at the east end of Glencoe, after the ascent of the Buachaill Etive, a man on a horse asked me where I had been. I answered, 'On the top of the Buachaill.' 'What business had you there?' said he. 'Seeing the glorious works of God,' said I. 'You have been disturbing the sheep,' said he; 'you will have to answer to my master for that.' 'I saw no sheep there,' was my reply; 'and as for your master, who claims a right to keep the Scottish braes as his private property, nothing could give me greater pleasure than to answer him publicly either at Fort William or at Edinburgh in the Court of Session.' Of course, I heard nothing more of the matter.

"The heather braes are free to any man,  
I hold, to tread, who bravely will and can."

The last place in which we should expect to find him, after such a glimpse of his holiday habits, is a hydropathic institute, with its strict supervisions and

prohibitions. "Chains and slavery" surely, after the Buachaill Etive! Yet we find him undergoing this regimen in 1849, and telling the world to go and do likewise. Among the millions of forgotten pamphlets in the bowels of the British Museum there is one composed of five letters on "The Water Cure in Scotland," written from Dunoon by John Stuart Blackie to the Aberdeen "Herald." "We rise every morning at six o'clock," the Latin Professor says, "and jump into a trough of cold water immediately after we jump out of bed, and drink four tumblers of the same 'best beverage'—*ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ* (Pindar)—cold from the hillside before breakfast." "Cold tub" was always a part of the Blackie system of life; but getting up at six was a mere episode, and was forgotten by the time he came to write the "Self-Culture." "As to early rising," he says there, "which makes such a famous figure in some biographies, I can say little about it, as it is a virtue which I was never able to practise."

After ten years of teaching in Aberdeen,



*George S. Blackie*

the Professor, now a middle-aged man of 42, but as eager for new light as ever, determined to renew his youth as a student in a German university. The summer of 1851 he spent at the University of Bonn, in order "to become more thoroughly acquainted with the present state of philological literature." Under his wing on this occasion was his half-brother George, whom we hear of casually as "very diligent in his botanical studies." George Blackie afterwards studied medicine in Edinburgh, emigrated to America, became Professor of Botany in the University of Tennessee, and the fervid leader of the Scottish colony in that State. A man of great all-round ability, which he lavished on enterprises for the public benefit, his special knowledge of medical botany raised him to a high place in the Confederate forces when quinine was contraband of war and substitutes had to be found for many such necessities of Southern existence. Dr. George Blackie died in 1881, at the age of 47.

Of the elder brother's doings and sayings that summer some have been preserved

that are still worth handing down : — “ I attend the lectures of the University every other day,” he writes to his father, “ and am much delighted, as much by the thorough knowledge of their subject displayed by the several professors as by the easy, natural, and often animated way in which they speak. From grace or dignity, indeed, so far as I have yet seen, they are far ; but I did not look for this, as, of all things, what is most foreign to the German mind is the art of exhibition. The people are delightfully simple-minded, true-hearted, and open, but they have too little of what the French and the Greeks have too much of, viz., vanity, and from this defect of character, wherever *show* is required, either in words or deeds, they either fail altogether or, like other pretenders, overdo the thing.”

“ I am looking curiously into all matters connected with the academical system here, hoping to turn my observations to some account in driving another goad beneath the fifth ribs of plausible ” So-and-so “ and crude ” What’s-his-name—two educational Goliaths whom this David had

to polemically slay before the University Reform fight could be won.

The German professors showed great attention to the man who had done so much to spread their literature and emulate their learning in a foreign land. On a visit to one of them Blackie met, among other notable men, old Maurice Arndt, "whose song of Marshal Blucher, and other blasts of patriotism—along with Russian gunpowder—helped the honest Germans to drive out Napoleon from the Fatherland in 1813."

Before coming back to Scotland the pedestrian professor went roughing it among the German peasants for a while; getting, for instance, to "a mere village of boors, where no 'gentleman' would think of lodging; but as I am only a *man* I rather like the variety of a dirty-looking country inn, as one often finds the most honest, unsophisticated people there, and as good fare as elsewhere (for an unfastidious palate)." His bill next morning, for supper, bed, breakfast, and two tumblers of Mosel wine, amounted to one and fourpence!

But the brightness of existence which dirty inns could not dull was sadly tarnished by a crippling attack of rheumatism. So far as the present generation knows, Blackie enjoyed perennial health; but before the present generation was born he had his share of ailments. We can be sorry for the sufferer, and yet forgive the "flitting devil" that drove him to write this letter. It is from Marienberg, in the middle of September, to his sister Marion, Mrs. Ross:—

"I am lame, and have been so now for more than two months, with no symptom of amendment. I thought at first 'twas merely a passing twitch of that flitting rheumatic devil which played various monkey-tricks about my side, back and limbs. Now he has taken firm hold of my left heel, like a vicious dog that will not quit his bite, and here I am, deprived of my main organ of motion and my grand implement of bodily health, feeling exactly like a bird suddenly clipt of its wings, or a king ungraciously kicked from his throne by a few chimney-sweep boys and sent out

like Louis Philippe by the back-door of his palace, or like a dog with a clog, or—" in fact, in a very suggestive state of misery.

"I sit the victim of a stupid philosophic resignation, with lucid intervals of faint alertness. Ichabod! Ichabod! I sometimes think that I am a used man, and have now little more to do than creep into a corner. At other times I think on Walter Scott and Sheridan Knowles, on Lord Byron and Sir William Gill, and even Napoleon in the island of St. Helena looking at the sunset with his back to the spectators. O Heavens! Most curious and comprehensive Fish, pray put an angling line with a good bait into the deep pond of your memory, and fish up for me a catalogue of lame men and a philosophy of limping that shall serve my need this winter, or longer if Providence will."

"The Pro," as he was affectionately called, had endowed his women-folk with an extraordinary series of nicknames, chosen perhaps for their very outlandishness and incongruity. No epithet could



possibly have been more incongruous than "Fish" for his sister Marion—a woman as nearly perfect as the race can produce, with warm affections and acute intelligence expressing themselves through a visible personality of unusual charm. The next sister, Helen, was "Podler" in her brother's vocabulary; while "Toodum" or "Toodi," or the "Too-derite," was his Aunt Marion. With a letter to "dear, dear Podler," breathing a deep personal affection which he did not often commit to paper, we may bring the Aberdonian chapter to an end.

In 1845 a friendship formed in the house of the Latin Professor led to his sister Helen's betrothal to the Rev. John Kennedy, who had then been for ten years in Aberdeen as minister of Blackfriars Independent Church. Soon afterwards Mr. Alexander Blackie retired with his family to Melrose, close to his native place; and there the wedding took place in the spring of 1846, the Professor and his wife travelling south for the occasion. Helen Blackie, therefore, came back as

Helen Kennedy to Aberdeen, and when she migrated with her husband to London, a few months later, the brother fell a-grieving thus:—

“I am not at all reconciled to the absence of your small but not unengaging personality. True, you have for some time past belonged not so much to me as you were wont to do—but whether absent in the body or present both in body and spirit, a Podler must still remain a necessary part of the imaginative and emotional furniture of my inner man. I am not at all pleased that I have lived so many weeks since your departure without having obtained any idea, clear or hazy, of the present locality, scenery and machinery, wherewith your dear little body is accompanied. I wish to know in what sort of a room you habitually sit, what sort of a prospect you have from the window, whether of smoking chimneys, rigged masts, a brewery, a pottery, a tannery or a church—whether of modest matrons with white caps sitting at a window knitting garments for the poor, or of dirty boys fighting, and bawling,

and wading in a dirty puddle. O Podler, give me some idea of these things! I verily in my present blank state know as little of you as I do of Camillus or Cincinnatus, or any other iron old Roman whom Livy has put upon stilts and made to spout sounding rhetoric for the amusement of Latin professors in this nineteenth century and the vexation of schoolboys."

## IX.

### THE GREEK CHAIR.



ARMS OF EDINBURGH  
UNIVERSITY.

On the 2nd of March, 1852, the Town Council of Edinburgh had a singular duty to perform; a duty from which the bravest of bailies, expert in paving stones and municipal finance, might shrink without a blush. Dunbar having died, Edinburgh University wanted a Greek professor, and Edinburgh Town Council had to supply the article. As likely as not some of the bailies and councillors knew a few words of Greek, but that was a small matter beside the question, What Church they belonged to? There were nineteen candidates; but thirteen names were withdrawn as soon as the Council met, the contest being evidently hopeless for them. The Lord Provost, Mr. Duncan Maclaren,

then nominated Dr. W. Smith—Dictionary Smith, afterwards Sir William—but admitted that he had a second choice in Mr. John Stuart Blackie. Blackie was then nominated by Bailie Morrison and Treasurer Wemyss, both waxing warm in his praise; and the third name announced was that of Mr. Charles Macdouall, Professor of Greek in Queen's College, Belfast. Mr. Bonamy Price, the Rev. J. Hannah, rector of the Edinburgh Academy, and Dr. Leonard Schmitz, rector of the High School, were also proposed, but as none of the three got as many as five votes—a minimum previously agreed on—they were all dropped after the first ballot. Blackie had a narrow escape, securing the five necessary votes and not one to spare. The field was now clear for the battle of the Kirks. Smith, the Nonconformist candidate, had taken first place with nine votes; Macdouall, the Free Church favourite, had one less. Blackie was supposed to represent the Establishment. In the second ballot Smith kept his nine votes, but his name was then dropped, for Macdouall and

Blackie had eleven each. Again the Council divided, and again the result was a tie: Macdouall sixteen, Blackie sixteen. The Lord Provost, his own man out of the way, gave the casting vote to Blackie; and so the chair was filled. "The toughest battle ever fought in Edinburgh," old Mr. Blackie called it in this hurried despatch to his son-in-law in London:—

*Philosophical Institution*

*4 Queen Street*

*Edinburgh 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 1852.*

*My dear Sir*  
*I have only time*  
*to write the word*  
*Victory*

*to put Blackie - offering*  
*the toughest battle*  
*that ever was fought*  
*in Edinburgh, the voting*  
*stands thus —*

*Blackie — 16*  
*Mr. Provost — 16*  
*Blackie gaining by the*  
*casting vote of the*  
*Provost —*

How the news was received in Aberdeen—! Well, the story has often been told in a lying fashion, and will bear telling in a true one. The victorious Professor is variously described as waving a red flag or a blanket out of his window and making a ferocious speech to the gathering crowd, eloquently shaking off the dust of their city from his feet. Blackie was lodging in the new town then, in the Adelphi. His Aberdeen friends, who were entirely devoted and not so few as they had been, were eager to hear the news from Edinburgh. To save them from unnecessary calls—especially one friend who lived within sight but at some little distance—and to spare an ailing landlady the trouble of constantly opening the door, the Professor promised to hang a white napkin from the window-sill if good news came. That is all.

On the other hand, Blackie made no pretence of sorrow at the end of his Aberdeen existence. He could not forget his friends, but they were the exceptions that proved the rule: the rule being, if not now unfriendliness, at least lack of sympathy

and comprehension. This is the beginning of a letter to his sister Marion—the queer beastie is meant for “Fish”—written on the day before he left a “waste wilderness, which does not even howl, but only surrounds one with an infinite dreariness” :—

Aberdeen

4 April

My dear Fish

!!!

This  
being my penultimate  
day in Aberdeen, I feel  
moved to write you a  
line of joy as a memorial  
of my ten years pulsing  
in this waste wilderness  
which does not even howl,  
but only surrounds one with  
an infinite dreariness  
without



Writing three days after the election to thank his brother-in-law for bringing influence to bear on certain Nonconformist members of the Council and helping to produce a "quite unexpected" result, the Professor said:—

"Now I enter among friends everywhere. 'All the world,' Hunter writes, 'now discover that' my 'claims were the highest'! Much obliged. I am thankful to Providence that a larger sphere of activity is now opened up to me. But I rejoice, above all things, that bigotry and sectarianism have been defeated. The election was substantially, with most of the electors, a mere affair of Churches. *Quousque tandem?* Is this the kind of practical Christianity that the world is called on to respect in the nineteenth century? Thank Heaven, there is a different picture in the Gospels and in HIM who pled the cause of the heterodox Samaritan."

"When I go to Edinburgh," he said in another letter, "I feel as if I were going home after a long banishment." His father, by the way, had brought his

household to Edinburgh, where he occupied himself as an amateur gardener and a director of the Philosophical Institution. "I have sometimes the notion that if my life in Aberdeen has been my church militant, my career in Edinburgh will be my church triumphant. But about the future I think little; who knows but Providence may wish to make a victim of me in the test business?"

This groundless fear apart, it was "not without trembling" that Blackie went to Edinburgh. "No doubt," he said, "my flaming certificates will have excited unreasonable expectations in the minds of some persons, which I am more likely to undershoot than to surpass. But a man who understands his subject is a fool to fret himself about his audience. Dash in, move your arms and legs, and trust to Providence, and you are not likely to be drowned in the deepest water."

The "flaming certificates" are all on view in the national storehouse of printed things, and only one demands a place here. It is from Thomas Carlyle, who describes his friend as "a man of lively intellectual

faculties, of ardent friendly character, and of wide speculation and acquirement. In all things he means sincerely; is of hopeful, rapid nature, very fearless, very kindly, without ill-humour and without guile."

So Blackie left Aberdeen, after a public banquet at which those who loved him and those who only admired him, and those who were glad to have him go for the sake of their nerves, united to bid him farewell; left his friends the students to gnash their teeth over the English pronunciation of Latin introduced by his successor; and became a citizen of Edinburgh for the rest of his days.

## X.

### EDUCATIONAL REFORM.

GLAD as he was to get his new post, Blackie was as far as possible from thinking it a place to rest and be thankful in. It was a vantage-ground, rather, from which he could wage war more freely against educational and other abuses. In the very letter which thanked "My Lord Provost and Gentlemen" for the honour they had conferred on him, he told them his "strenuous care for the future" would be "to advance the interests and raise the standard of classical education in Scotland." He found the same "radical vice" in Edinburgh as in Aberdeen: a defective school system, turning out boys without the preliminary knowledge which would fit them for university learning. In Edinburgh matters were in some respects worse, for the classes were much larger, and there was "no Hellenic Dr. Melvin

existing in the schools from which the Edinburgh Greek classes drew their supply." Blackie immediately got the Town Council to introduce an entrance examination for the Greek classes; and he secured his former student, Mr. Donaldson, as his assistant, to "coach" the more ignorant of those who knew just enough to pass. In his inaugural lecture he set up a high ideal of classical culture before the university, and tried to rouse the sleeping ambitions of his countrymen. Greek, Sidney Smith had said, never marched in great force beyond the Tweed: but, said Blackie, "a half-starved hound will win the race before an overfed spaniel. So may we, Greek starvelings here on the Firth of Forth, yet get the start of those sleek Hellenists on the banks of the Cam and Isis, if we only rouse our mettle properly and do our best." A little later he was addressing the Lord Provost and Town Council on "the advancement of learning in Scotland," and reproachfully telling them that in Berlin University there were twelve lecturers expounding various branches of Greek literature and

art. "And you," he said, "you have one to do all—or rather to do none at all, only to teach the elementary command of the



THE PROFESSOR AT THE AGE OF 45.

Greek language as it is acquired at a German school." "Greek," he wrote in the following year, "is an exotic in Scot-

land, and can never flourish without glass ; but they leave the poor plant in the open air as if it were cabbages or potatoes. O wisdom ! ”

This was in 1856. Four years later, thanks largely to Blackie's agitation and partly to a scheme of University reform which he prepared and which a Scottish national society brought to the notice of every Member of Parliament, a considerable measure of reform was obtained. As often happens, he who had been the soul of the movement in its early and struggling days, a voice crying in the wilderness with hardly so much as an echo, was almost ignored when the cause became popular and the laggards were swarming to the front. For example, two and a-half columns of "The Times" for January 2nd, 1858, are filled with the report of a great public meeting in Edinburgh, under the auspices of the Association for the Extension and Improvement of the Scottish Universities. Dr. Candlish, Principal Tulloch, Lord Neaves, Dr. Guthrie, and nine or ten others made speeches ; but the only sign of Blackie's existence is a reproachful

remark by the Chairman, Lord Chief Justice Campbell, that his friend the Professor should not lead Englishmen to exaggerate the defects of Scottish scholarship. This the Professor had answered in advance. In "The Times" of November 11th, 1857 (side by side with announcements of the capture of Delhi and the relief of Lucknow), there is a two-column report of Blackie's introductory lecture for the winter session. After comparing Edinburgh and Oxford, though not flattering either, he said: "So long as I see the most glaring defects and the most unmitigated absurdities tolerated in our existing University system, I shall consider it my duty, on every suitable occasion, to stand forward and denounce them, that both my own usefulness may no longer be marred and the intellectual character of the nation no longer degraded by the continuance of puerile practices in our highest seats of learning." Among other points on which he dwelt was the need of greater encouragements and rewards for scholarship in the Northern Universities. "Even Scotsmen, whose



brains are as hard as reapers' loins, cannot afford to study and to starve at the same time." The wound he declared to be incurable unless a swift remedy were applied; and he asked whether Scotland would "voluntarily surrender to a foreign people and to a strange system the highest education of her noblest sons."

The Professor's battle was only half won. His country's educational system, the measureless importance of which even Scotsmen but half realise, was improved, but it was painfully far from perfect. There were two great idols set up in the land—Cram and Shop; until they could be deposed Blackie reckoned his work unfinished. They are still standing; but the worshippers of Cram are in open revolt, and Shop will presently be dragged from the high altar to its appropriate niche. Blackie, as a practical man, had no objection to special study for special work. He was a specialist himself, and studied most systematically; though the outside public were bewildered into a different impression by his amazing versatility. A desultory and miscellaneous habit of reading, he

once remarked, was "like the racing of some little dog about the moor, snuffing everything and catching nothing." What he abhorred was to see a man so fill himself with the speciality of his profession as to have no room for broadly human interests—a habit that has blighted the lives of great men enough. "Avoid professionalism!" he cried. "Medicine has as much to do with a knowledge of human nature and of the human soul as with the virtues of cunningly-mingled drugs and the revelations of a technical diagnosis; and theology is generally the least human and least evangelical when it is most stiffly orthodox and most nicely professional." "Not a few persons are a sort of human lobster: they live in a hard shell formed out of some professional, ecclesiastical, political, or classical crust, and cautiously creep their way within certain beaten bounds, beyond which they have no desires."

These words are from "Self Culture," and were not printed for twenty years after Blackie came to Edinburgh; but his ideas about education were fresh, healthy,

human, and consistent, all though his public life. Only seven years ago, for example, he published "A Letter to the People of Scotland on the Reform of their Academical Institutions," pleading, as he had pled forty years before, for "thorough and far-reaching reforms" in the machinery of our educational institutions, urging that boys should be educated up to a much higher standard at school—a "gymnasium," college, or middle school being established in every county—so that a professor might devote all his energies to teaching of the highest kind.

Education—as we all know, but grudge to confess, so woefully is our practice at odds with such a principle—is the drawing out of talents, the development of powers. "The best educated man is the man who has been well trained to do as many things as possible for himself."\* What an ignoramus a scholar may be under this definition! Books, much as he loved them, were of quite secondary importance in education, according to Blackie, and bookishness a

\* Tract on Education, 1868.

disease. "What a student should specially see to, both in respect of health and of good taste" (here we dip into Self Culture again) "is not to carry the breath of books with him wherever he goes, as some people carry the odour of tobacco." The young should "commence their studies as much as possible by direct observation of facts." "All the natural sciences are particularly valuable, not only as supplying the mind with the most rich, various, and beautiful furniture, but as teaching people that most useful of all arts—how to use their eyes. Among the most useful primary studies are Botany, Zoology, Mineralogy, Geology, Chemistry, Architecture, Drawing, and the Fine Arts." Along with accurate observation should go well-disciplined but active imagination. "In history, and in the whole region of concrete facts, imagination is as necessary as in poetry; the historian, indeed, cannot invent his facts, but he must mould them and dispose them with a graceful congruity; and to do this is the work of the imagination. Fairy tales and fictitious narratives of all kinds, of course, have

their value, and may be wisely used in the culture of the imagination. But by far the most useful exercise of this faculty is when it buckles itself to realities. Count yourself not to know a fact when you know that it took place, but then only when you see it as it did take place."

As for the great god Cram, Blackie says:—"All debauch is incipient suicide; it is the unseen current beneath the house which sooner or later washes away the foundations. So it is with study. Long-continued intense mental exercise, especially in that ungrateful and ungenial form of the acquisition of knowledge called Cram, weakens the brain, disorders the stomach, and makes the general action of the whole organism languid and unemphatic. Be warned, therefore, in time. Violent methods will certainly produce violent results. Wisdom is a good thing; but it is not good even to be wise always."

But Cram was the offspring of our examination system. What was to be done with this parent-idol? Examinations of some kind were necessary. The

question was, How to conduct them "so as to hit upon the best man," or to really discover the knowledge of a set of men without encouraging Cram. Taking his own particular subject, Greek, he answers: "(1) I would place before the candidate a selection of some dozen passages of the best prose writers in the Greek language, but passages not involving any special linguistic difficulty, in the rich and various groups of its literary existence, from Herodotus to Polybius and Clemens of Alexandria, and from the Church fathers through the whole series of Byzantine writers, down to Phranzes, in the fifteenth century, and from him forward to Tricoupi, Rangabes, Bikelas, in the most recent phase of that wonderful continuity of cultivated human speech, and should require of him to accompany his translation of these passages into clear, vigorous and tasteful English, with such remarks on the historical sequence and social significance of the facts recorded or the opinions expressed as would naturally suggest themselves to a thoughtful and sympa-

thetic young reader"—under the stimulus of a thoughtful and sympathetic teacher. " (2) I would then place before him the names of some dozen or a score of famous Greek authors, from Homer to Rangabes, and ask him to write what he knew of them, from the general history of Greek literature or from special study. (3) I would hang up before him on the wall of the examination room a series of some dozen or a score of engravings of well-known places, and portraits of famous persons in Greek, Roman, and recent times, and request him to stand up before me and describe *viva voce* in the Greek language both the picture before him and the memories which it recalled, with the feelings which it stirred in his bosom; and I should then request him to retire and set down in cool writing what he had written in fervid speech."

## XI.

### RATIONAL GREEK.

So much for Blackie as the reformer of education in general. As the reader, though he may be reckoned a profound Greek scholar, has probably never heard of Rangabes or Bikelas, let the professor now be introduced as reformer of Greek education in particular. He repudiated, it should be said, any claim of the Greek language to the fictitious primacy given to it in the English Universities. "George Buchanan, John Milton and John Locke studied Latin and Greek because these languages were the key to the only great storehouses of useful knowledge and high culture then open to the world. It is not so now. The most rich and various storehouses of all sorts of knowledge, both speculative and practical, are open to a modern British man without any key but his mother tongue." "What was once an



anomalous necessity has now become an absurd anachronism and a scholastic tradition, defended mainly on the ground that it is valuable, like mathematics, as a mental discipline—is, in fact, the one indispensable course of drill without which, in these latter days, a well-educated man cannot be produced. But this is a gross exaggeration.” “The Greeks learned no language but their mother tongue, and were nothing the less the wisest people in the ancient world, and the teachers of wisdom to all generations; but even on the supposition that linguistic training is the very best possible, it is quite certain that German is as good for this purpose as either Latin or Greek, with this immense advantage—that the language of Goethe and Bismarck, if once learned, is likely to be used. . . . Neither Latin nor Greek has any claim to be prescribed as a *sine qua non* to the full participation in the privileges of academical education in this country.”\*

When Greek is taught—and he was eloquent on its advantages to ministers

\* In “The Times,” January 21, 1891.

and other professional men—let it be as a living language, and not as a curious grammatical skeleton. This was another of Blackie's messages to the dull ears of his country. It came as a revelation to most men, the knowledge that Greek is not a dead language "but a very vital speech, as any man may see in a Greek newspaper—in fact, the only living bridge betwixt the remote past and the actual present of our European civilisation, and," more wonderful still, "living in a state as free from any borrowed blot or blemish as it was in the days of Plato, of Alexander the Great or the Apostle Paul." In a preface he contributed not long ago to a manual of modern Greek he insisted that "a language which has come down to us in an uninterrupted stream of vitality from the time of Homer to the present hour—nearly 3,000 years—and is still spoken extensively, not only in Greece proper but in various parts of the Mediterranean, by confessedly the most acute, the best educated and the most progressive people in those parts, has a legitimate claim to be treated and studied as a living

language, and not to be stretched out, as dead bodies are on an anatomical table, for the purposes of the grammatical dissector."

One curious but inevitable result of the English style of teaching Greek is that our great Greek scholars, when they visit Greece, cannot even make themselves understood. It is said that Mr. Gladstone himself had to fall back on Italian; while his friend Blackie could chat away with the Athenians in their own language as comfortably as with the Aberdonians in theirs. He took a keen interest in the domestic affairs of the nation which, after emancipating itself from Mahomedan bondage, undertook to purify the ancient language of Plato and Herodotus from the Turkish and Italian corruptions of later centuries, and is now struggling against difficulties and corruptions of another kind. He became an honorary member of the Society for the Spread of Greek Letters, at Athens, and of the Greek Philological Society at Constantinople. The breadth of his sympathies and of his studies shows itself in the volume of

"*Horæ Hellenicæ*," which he published in 1874 with a dedication to Mr. Gladstone, "Statesman, Orator, and Scholar." The subjects of these essays vary from "The Philological Genius and Character of the Neo-Hellenic Dialect" and "The Place and Power of Accent in Language" to "The Spartan Constitution and the Agrarian Laws of Lycurgus," "The Scientific Interpretation of Myths," and "The Popular Poetry of Modern Greece." National poetry, as we Scotsmen ought to know, was a subject very dear to the Professor's heart. On the Greek side of the subject here is just one quotation for the benefit of the curious. Blackie found that "Charon, or Death, is a great figure in the popular poetry of the modern Greeks, and is one of the very few, perhaps the only mythical personage which Byzantine orthodoxy and Slavonian barbarism have left to haunt the hills of Greece from the fair company that once peopled Olympus." And the Professor gives us this example, translated into English verse:—

Why are the hills so dusky dark, so dark and  
sable shrouded?

Is it the wind that flouts the crag, or is it the rain  
that's beating?

'Tis not the wind that flouts the crag, 'tis not the  
rain that's falling;

'Tis only Charon with his dead that o'er the hills  
is treading.

The Professor of Greek was not afraid of that noble language falling into oblivion among scholars when such artificial and unjustifiable props as the laws of Oxford and Cambridge should be knocked away. "A language," he says, "which has survived so many changes, and resisted such a succession of destructive forces, will maintain its vitality unimpaired so long as the moral motive-power of the world is mainly Christian, and the science of the world is proud to root itself in Greek traditions." There is, he says in the same *Hora Hellenica*, no reason why Greek should not be studied much more than at any previous period "when our classical scholars shall have become ashamed of their false methods and narrow prejudices, and when a succession of intelligent travellers shall have been practically convinced that it is as easy to

learn Greek in Athens as to learn German in Berlin or French in Paris." But so long as the present farce is being played by our university authorities, "let Greek grammars and Greek lexicons be multiplied to infinity; let certain plays of Euripides and certain treatises of Aristotle be commented on, so long as England shall be England, by all the aspirants to a mastership, a deanery, or a bishopric in the kingdom; let headmasters of large schools and tutors of colleges dilate in every form of mingled reason and sophistry on the never-sufficiently-to-be-belauded advantages of a classical education; with all this the inner soul of Greece will not be known by, or knowable to, the normal Englishman; and Greek scholarship in England will be liable to become a thing, as we have too frequently seen it, altogether without a soul—a thing that deals merely with the external shell of learning, and amuses a snugly-cabined leisure with all sorts of grammatical fribbles and philological card-castles;"\* or, as he once very happily put it, "mere scraps and dry

\* *Edinburgh Essays*, 1857.

bones, a respectable tradition 'having a name to live while it is dead,' a stunted, artificial growth, all thorns and no berries." To Blackie all this was revealed more than half-a-century ago. In 1850 he wrote for the "Aberdeen Universities Magazine" two articles to show that modern Greek is not more different from the Hellenic than is the English of Macaulay from the English of Chaucer or Wicklif. "Wilt thou not," he concluded, "act on thy belief" that Greek is a living tongue, and to be pronounced accordingly, not in the false and conventional way? "Pedantic or conservative scholars will certainly laugh at thy strange pronunciation, and call thee an affected fool: but truth, maintained in the love of it, cannot be affected. Laugh at the world if it laughs at thee, and thou wilt be a better, mightier, and earnestest man for thy trials. For assuredly, as Paul and Pope Urban have said, it is only through much tribulation that thou (or anyone else) canst enter into the kingdom of heaven!" He opened his second session in Edinburgh with a lecture on "The Living Language

of the Greeks, and Its Utility to the Classical Scholar," in which he proposed that living Hellenes should be imported to act as tutors for the lower Greek classes in the Universities, or, better still, that travelling bursaries should be established, enabling the best students to spend six months in Athens. And he saw to it that if no one else took his advice the proposal should still be carried out, by setting aside £2,500 of his own money for the purpose.

When the Professor was too weak to write by his own hand, he dictated a request for information as to a class for teaching modern Greek by the conversational method, which Mr. Christos Bougatsos, a graduate of the University of Athens, had opened in London. Professor Blackie took great interest in this experiment, which will be followed by others, one may hope, even in the ancient universities of "England, that grand European stronghold of all reasonable and unreasonable conservatism." Of Blackie's other writings on the Greek language and literature, a complete list would include



his Edinburgh Essay on "The Philosophy of Plato," 1856; his paper on "The Character, Condition, and Prospects of the Greek People," in the "Westminster Review" for October, 1854; his article on "Plato and Christianity," in the "North British Review" for November, 1861; and many other contributions to various reviews; his book on "The Pronunciation of Greek," 1852; his preface to Clyde's Greek Syntax in 1856; parts of the "Four Phases of Morals," and of "Lays and Legends of Ancient Greece," which fall more naturally into another chapter; his "Greek and English Dialogues for Use in Schools and Colleges," and his "Greek Primer, Colloquial and Constructive." The dry titles are all of these books that can here be given. "The Wise Men of Greece," published in 1877, is a series of dramatic dialogues, designed "to give the general reading public, so far as they may care for wisdom, a living concrete notion of what the thought of Thales was in his day to the society of Miletus, what Pythagoras with his school of moral discipline was to Crotona, Xeno-

phanes to Colophon, and so with the rest"—the rest including Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Socrates, and Plato.

Blackie's greatest work, so far as length of labour and resulting dimensions are concerned, was that on Homer—a subject on which he had already written for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Of the four large volumes grouped under the title "Homer and the Iliad," the first and the last, composed of "Notes Philological and Archæological," contain the results of a vast amount of research such as no scholar can despise, in a form which no intelligent man can describe as dull. The two middle volumes contain the Iliad itself, translated into English verse. As to this, it is enough to say that Blackie had no idea of making "a poetical translation so elegantly defaced as that of Pope"; that he succeeded to a large extent in rendering vivid to English minds the spirit, the ideas, and the action of the old Greek epic; and that such ruggedness as occurs in the translation hardly exceeds the demands of fidelity to

the original. These few lines, picked out at random, will give an idea of the metrical form :—

Five times ten ships Achilles owned that swiftly  
ploughed the brine,  
And fifty men in each good ship obeyed the chief  
divine.

Five captains over all he placed, who each with  
due control  
Led on their several bands; himself was lord to  
sway the whole.

\*                      \*

As when a cunning builder well-hewn stones hath  
nicely joined,  
Tier above tier, in a palace wall, to bar the  
whistling wind,  
So helm to helm was closely pressed, and bossy  
shield to shield,  
And man to man was tightly packed o'er all the  
bristling field.

\*                      \*

As when the strength of fire divine hath seized a  
dry old wood,  
Deep in a heathy glen, and now the wind in lusty  
mood  
Rolls raving through the crackling trees the folds  
of the flaming flood;  
So raged Achilles with his spear, and like a god  
the slain  
Upon the slain he heaped; with blood swims all  
the reeking plain.

On the great Homeric question, the question "whether Homer wrote his own poems," as some one puts it, Blackie found the evidence insufficient to justify dogmatism, especially on the negative side; but he keenly appreciated the "positive" work of the "negative" champion. Wolf, he says, "attempted to establish strange paradoxes, repugnant alike to the instincts of a sound æsthetical and of a healthy historical criticism"; but "the principal value of Wolf's theory in the eye of many genuine lovers of poetry is that while it robbed us of the poet Homer and his swarms of fair fancies, it restored to us the Greek people, and their rich garden of heroic tradition, watered by fountains of purely national feeling, and freshened by the breath of a healthy popular opinion."

"Homer and the Iliad"—from which this last quotation is not made, by the bye—represented the work of twenty years. When the author consulted John Murray about getting it into print, the publisher warned him, "Never publish

Greek in Scotland." "He was right there," said Blackie, after neglecting Murray's advice and finding himself about £250 out of pocket.

## XII.

### PROFESSOR AND STUDENTS.

"It is but a fallen university," mourned Robert Louis Stevenson, in a briskly melancholy message to his successors in the Edinburgh class-rooms.\* "To-day they have Professor Butcher, and I hear he has a prodigious deal of Greek; and they have Professor Chrystal, who is a man filled with the mathematics. And doubtless these are set-offs. But they cannot change the fact that Professor Blackie has retired and Professor Kelland is dead." Unhappily, this brightest of Blackie's many brilliant students, the man whose jewelled words make even Dullness sparkle, went before his old Professor to the happy hereafter. It is sad for us who remain to think that both have gone; sad even to think that the one never wrote his impressions of the other. To be sure, Stevenson was not

\* Book of the University Union Fancy Fair.

in the Greek class above a dozen times. "Professor Blackie was even kind enough to remark (more than once), while in the very act of writing my certificate of attendance," Stevenson says, "that he did not know my face. Indeed, I denied myself many opportunities; acting upon an extensive and highly rational system of truancy, which cost me a great deal of trouble to put in exercise—perhaps as much as would have taught me Greek—and sent me forth into the world and the profession of letters with the merest shadow of an education. None ever had more certificates for less education." But those dozen hours, described by the Great Imaginer, would have been a priceless contribution to Blackie's biography.

Others have written, however, who have earned a right to be read since they listened to the Greek Professor; and every one, it is safe to say, of the hundreds of his students, now scattered over the whole world, has some tale to tell of Blackie in old Edinburgh days.

To begin with, as we have seen, aspirants for Grecian culture had to pass an exam-



EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY.

*From a Photograph by Mr. A. A. Inglis, Edinburgh.*



ination before they could enter Blackie's class at all. Those who tried and failed were put in a preliminary class under the tutorship of the Professor's assistant. During the session the lads would have another chance, and those who scraped through this second examination would find themselves in the fold of the head shepherd. Blackie had three classes. In the lowest, however diligent the tutor had been, Blackie found himself face to face with lads entirely unfit for the higher learning a professor is supposed to give. In the second class, which young fellows from the highest forms of the High School and Academy used to enter, the reading of Plutarch, Euripides, and even Homer, was possible; while the score or so of students who filtered through into the third-year class were able to concern themselves chiefly with Plato.

The class assembles. The Professor enters, nimble and erect, a whiff of East wind from the North Bridge coming in with him and playing among his long snowy locks. No matter how bad the ventilation, with sixty or even a hundred

pairs of lungs using up the air, there is a breeze in that room as long as the Professor is there. "Blackie carries his breeze with him," says Mr. Barrie.

As likely as not the Professor is greeted with a cheer, which he gracefully acknowledges. After repeating the Lord's Prayer in Greek, he opens the class-work with the remark, "As I was enjoying the sunset on Princes Street yesterday, I met a beautiful damsel in an ugly brown dress. Say that in Greek, Macnab." Which Macnab does as well as he can, and Macgregor, perhaps, a little better. The Professor makes a forcible remark on the incongruity, not to say criminality, of dressing a bonnie lass in a dowdy gown, and then asks Robbie Thomson to get up and turn a bit of the Iliad into vigorous English. Robbie is in the middle of his eleventh line when the Professor breaks in, seizes on some little word that was in danger of slipping by unnoticed, tells how it came to mean what it does, and describes the state of Greece at some period of the word's development. Davie Johnstone is called on next, and gets through five lines; but

his accentuation outrages the sensitive ear of the Professor, who sings a Greek ballad to show how the language ought to be pronounced. The sixth line strikes the Professor as a good peg on which to hang the second paragraph of his lecture, and he proceeds to expound the ethical or political conditions revealed in the text, fearlessly applying its lessons to the most ticklish and controversial problems of present-day politics. The association of ideas will lead him on to dilate at one time on the poems of Ossian or of Browning, at another on the affinities of Gaelic and Greek, and to complain that no composer has yet arisen to utilise the magnificent capacity of the Gaelic tongue for an opera. In a poetic allusion to the domestic affairs of the gods Blackie finds an opportunity of confidentially advising his students never to keep any secret from their future wives. "You can't do it if you try," he observes. "The other day, while I was on a visit to a friend in the country, I climbed a tree,"—he was a youngster of fifty at the time—"but I saw the farmer coming and slid down in

such a hurry that I tore my good black coat. I put on a great coat, reached home unnoticed, and quietly got my sister to sew up the rent; but when I next put the coat on to go out, my careful wife came to brush me down. 'Why,' she said, 'when did this happen?' and the whole story was out." Another spell of Greek provokes another outburst of cosmopolitan wisdom from this modern Socrates; and so the time passes until there is only a quarter of an hour left, when one of the seniors is asked to take the poem in hand, and translates a page or two at full speed. The students are then instructed to produce a Greek version of "Jack the Giant-Killer," or translate a dialogue on the respective merits and demerits of the Free and Established Kirks—composed for the occasion by the Professor—or to undertake some equally unconventional exercise, and the class is dismissed.

According to Mr. Barrie, "there was a notebook which appeared year after year" in the class. "It contained the Professor's jokes of a former session, carefully classified by an admiring student.

It was handed down from one year's men to the next; and thus, if Blackie began to make a joke about haggis, the possessor of the book had only swiftly to turn to the H's, find out what the joke was, and send it along the class quicker than the Professor could speak it."

Occasionally the proceedings, never humdrum but generally in good enough order, became uproarious to the point of rank rebellion. "Those who do not know their grammar sufficiently," says one of the old students from whose chronicles, verbal or published, it is safe to quote,\* "are exasperated at not having an opportunity of learning more; while those whom superior advantages have long ago enabled to master the beggarly elements are delighted at not being obliged to retrace the weary waste of verbs and particles." When, therefore, the Professor embarks on a course of things-in-general, the former faction protests by

\* The verbal need not be specified: the published accounts are—Mr. Charles Lowe's, in the *World*; Mr. J. M. Barrie's, in the *British Weekly*; and "Fergus Mackenzie's" in *Alma Mater*.

"O-O-ing and shuffling with their feet, whereupon the progressists feel bound in honour to raise a counter-demonstration, and the Professor's voice is finally drowned in a Babel uproar of hissing, whistling, cock-crowing, and cat-calls." But it was often partisan or sectarian zeal rather than academic ambition that raised the storm. Blackie's modern heroes, worthy to be held up along with the heroes of Homer for the admiration of his class, included Dr. Guthrie and Norman Macleod; but one day he expressed a preference for Macleod. Some one hissed. "In a moment the Professor was as furious as a Highland tarn in a tempest, and shouted at the top of his voice, 'Put out that Free Kirk deevil!' Fortunately, the imp could not be discovered." Blackie used to say, "There are three animals that hiss: a serpent, a goose, and a creature that should be a man."

Once in Mr. Barrie's experience—he does not tell us what part he took in it—the class had to be broken up. "In Blackie's class-room there used to be a demonstration every time he mentioned

the name of a distinguished politician." On this occasion the Professor looked, at least, as if he were angry. "I will say Beaconsfield," he exclaimed. (Cheers and hisses.) "Beaconsfield." (Uproar.) Then he would stride forward, and, seizing the railing, announce his intention of saying Beaconsfield until every goose in the room was tired of cackling. ("Question!") "Beaconsfield." ("No, no!") "Beaconsfield." ("Hear, hear," shouts of "Gladstone," and "Three cheers for Dizzy!") Eventually the class was dismissed as "a bear-garden," or worse; and five minutes afterwards the Professor would be "playing himself down the North Bridge on imaginary bagpipes."

Such episodes, however, did not prevent Blackie's students—those, at any rate, who had been fairly ready for University life when they entered his class—did not prevent them from becoming good Greek scholars before Blackie had done with them. And the lad must have been dull as oblivion who failed to receive or retain the essence of the best Greek philosophy, ennobled by a Christian spirit

and given off with the penetrating force of genius. The function of a professor is, in Blackie's words, "to stimulate philosophic thought and open up the paths of scholarly research"; and one who may be taken as the spokesman of hundreds of grateful men the world over declares that Blackie fulfilled his mission by "opening the eyes of blind youth, flashing wisdom before it, and persuading it to think."

Blackie could teach Greek from the rudiments upwards, if that had been his business; and he could show others the way, which was better still. The Northern minister who as "Fergus Mackenzie" has chronicled "The Humours of Glenbruar" was present one Saturday at a gathering of Edinburgh teachers when a Normal School Principal gave a lecture. Professor Blackie attended as critic, and, having fulfilled this disagreeable duty in his own agreeable way, he gave the young men an object-lesson in the teaching of Greek by the natural method—the only effectual way of teaching Greek or any other spoken language. Stepping to the front of the rostrum, the Professor commanded a youth



on the front seat to "say *ἥλιον*." No answer. "Say *ἥλιον*," he repeated. Still no reply. "Say *ἥλιον*, you —" the Professor shouted, with a threatening whirl of his staff. "*Ἡλιον*," the youth cried out in terror. "Very good; now say, *τὸν ἥλιον*." He did, with alacrity. "Now say *ὁρῶ τὸν ἥλιον*." "*Ὅρῶ τὸν ἥλιον*," came the answer. "Do you know what you are saying?" asked the Professor. "No," said the youth: he was a reporter.

The reporters insinuated themselves occasionally into the Greek class-room itself, along with truants from less attractive quarters of the University. On the last day of the session, indeed, the proceedings were regarded by the Press, if not by the Professor, as a fair source of "copy." The programme — apart from such interpolations by student lungs as any student memory can imagine — consisted of three parts. First, the distribution of prizes — generally books, but sometimes pictures on which the students had been set to write Greek meditations. Second, the speech — considerately delivered in English for the benefit of the weaker Grecians

—brimful of affectionate and practical advice to those about to become citizens. Third, and last, the Greek poem, declaimed by the Professor as he alone could declaim it, chanting, in mock heroics but with many a beautiful phrase, the renown of the prize-winners, "than whom more brilliant victors were never bred on English soil, nor in this Celtic land so famed for learned men. Some envious power," the poet continues, with merry eye but only half in jest, "assigned to Scotsmen a rugged plot of earth on the chilly edge of the world. A backbone of barren rock extends from sea to sea, and the land bears everywhere a crop of stones. To the English the soil yields roses unasked ; to us, thistles, and that with labour. But strong hearts, subtlety of thought, unbending wills, untiring hands, and a spark of the fire divine which Prometheus brought from heaven to kindle wise invention—these are the glorious gifts that the blessed ones, the givers of all good things, have bestowed on Caledonia ; *our* roses these ! " And then he celebrates in turn the classical conquests of "Mac-

Master, who lays hold of knowledge like a crab clawing his prey"; "Kennedy, gentle, mild of speech, pure in spirit, like a violet on the bank of a sacred river"—some exceptionally angelic member of the clan; "McClymont, in whose kindly face shines the kindliness of his heart": and so forth.\*

Blackie's love for his students was not a thing of words. He visited them when they were ill, he helped them when they were poor. In the *Senatus Academicus* he was the champion of the whole body of undergraduates. He never grew old in heart, so he could look at all things, as few but young men can, from a young man's standpoint. They loved him in return. They loved him as one of themselves; as a buoyant, hopeful idealist. They admired him for his genius, but they loved him for his candour, his courage, his open-mindedness, his transparent and unconventional sincerity.

Many men out of Edinburgh still remember the famous snow riots between "town" and "gown" some thirty years

\* 1863.

ago ; in fact, I cannot say how recent the last of the riots may have been. Early one morning the Town Council, with commendable but insufficient foresight, sent up a fire-engine to the college quadrangle to melt the snow that had fallen in the night. The medical students, being earlier still, captured the engine and played the hose up and down the street till nightfall, snow and water being more than a match for policemen's batons. During one of these riots, an old student says, a score of undergraduates were made prisoners, but (perhaps for that reason) the shops had to keep their shutters up for a week. "I remember Blackie marching into the quadrangle one day. Mounting the steps to the right that led to his classroom, with the springing step of a boy, he was suddenly arrested by a snowball. Swinging round and facing the silent students, throwing aside his plaid and lifting his hat from his silvery locks, he cried out, with a dramatic gesture, 'Throw away, my brave fellows!'" The snowballs were instantly dropped. "I never," says the narrator, "remember

Blackie looking more picturesque than he did on that day."

There is one student story about the Professor that has appeared, at one time or another, in almost every newspaper printed in English, and still insists on a place in Blackie literature. Blackie himself totally forgot this, as he did many other unimportant incidents; but it is true enough. Mr. George M. Lawson, of Newtyle, was an eye-witness. He says: "One morning in the spring of 1879, as the students attending the Greek class, then held in the north-east corner of the old University, were hurrying up at nine o'clock, they were confronted by a notice, posted on one of the pillars outside, somewhat to this effect:—'Owing to the outbreak of fire this morning, Professor Blackie regrets that he will not be able to meet his classes to-day.' One of us—I do not claim the distinction—stroked out the 'c' of 'classes,' whereat the laughter of the undergraduates became extreme. In the course of the morning, as I was lounging about the quadrangle awaiting the next class hour, I saw Professor

Blackie emerge from what I think was the Senate Hall, at the south-east corner of the buildings. A small crowd still surrounded the notice, and at sight of the Professor the laughter and the shouting were renewed. He walked across to see what the excitement was about, and the students readily gave way to let him see the joke at his expense. Without saying a word the Professor took out a pencil, stroked out the 'l,' and walked off. He seemed to think little about the incident, and evidently before he next heard of the joke he had forgotten all about it, as it has frequently been reported that he doubted its authenticity."

Every Saturday the Professor used to have a batch of his students to breakfast. Mr. Barrie inferred, from observation, that the guests were chosen on account of their physical peculiarities, "such as a lisp, or a glass eye, or one leg longer than the other, or a broken nose." The supply of defective students would soon have run short, even with two or three hundred men on the rolls; but there is no doubt that Blackie was full of tenderness for the

maimed and the halt. Once, in class, he noticed that the young man whose turn it was to translate was holding the book in his left hand. "Hold the book in your right hand," he commanded. The lad paused for a moment, but only went on with his reading. "Hold it in your RIGHT HAND," called out the Professor, angered by disobedience. Some of the students hissed, and the young man with downcast eyes stretched forth a right arm without a hand. "My dear boy," said the Professor, coming down from his desk and embracing the youth in fatherly pity and shame, "*can* you forgive me?" Then, as the room rang with applause, "I am glad that I teach a class of gentlemen"—not serpents, this time!

Let us get back to our breakfast, with Mr. Lowe for chronicler. "Eight is generally the breakfast hour, and the hungry company arrive with exemplary punctuality."

Whatever other system of selection he had, Blackie naturally gave the poor Highland students the preference over Edinburgh lads, some of whom were never

invited at all. "It was a bit of an ordeal," says one of the guests, "to have to translate the Greek mottoes on the Professor's library walls before going down to the coffee and Findon haddocks" and a soup-tureen full of eggs, "but Blackie always responded to the appeal of shyness, and seldom oppressed a young student who looked uncomfortable by professorial attentions of this nature."

Mr. Lowe again speaks:—"The Professor welcomes all with a few kind words, and, after grace in Greek, recommends his guests, as a rule of their lives, to read, as he does, a chapter of the Septuagint every morning on rising. At these repasts the rule is that every one shall express his ideas and wants, as far as possible, in the speech of Xerophon. All the guests are somewhat sheepish and shy; but the Professor, aided by the tact of Mrs. Blackie, will occasionally elicit a shrewd remark. Raw, red-haired Donald Macleod, from the Isle of Skye, who lives all the week on herring, oatmeal, and potatoes, being importuned, will treat the company to a Gaelic song; and then the Professor



will launch out on the importance of this tongue for philological and other purposes. Then some remark will make him revert to his past career, and he will inflame the peripatetic ambition of his audience by referring to his wanderings all over Europe in search of truth and beauty; or he will recount how he met that doughty champion of Chartism, Ernest Jones, on the platform of the Music Hall to hold public appeal to reason on the merits of Democracy. Then, to vary the entertainment, the Professor will sing one of his own songs. Then all rising will join in pealing forth 'Gaudeamus Igitur,' and file out, filled in body and in mind, to woo digestion on the shores of the Forth or the slopes of Arthur's Seat.

### XIII.

#### NOCTES HELLENICÆ.

THERE were suppers as well as breakfasts at Blackie's: the legitimate successors to Noctes Ambrosianæ, more sober, but just as gay. The Hellenic Society which he had planted in Aberdeen took root and flourished mightily in Edinburgh as the Hellenic Club. The club met once a fortnight, and the married members entertained it in turn. Whoever the host might be, Blackie was the leading spirit of the company, and if we are to attend a meeting of the club let it be at his own house in Hill Street, a thoroughfare already hallowed by the residence of Sir Walter Scott. Arriving a little early, as soon as the door is opened you hear some one striding about and dropping masculine scraps of song as he goes. The owner of the voice immediately dashes out upon you and hales you through a doorway

over which *χαλεπὰ τὰ καλὰ* is printed in letters of gold. You find yourself at once in the master's workshop. The walls, and not the walls only, are covered with books, arranged—well, at first you think they are not arranged at all. You never saw a library like this. Books of every age and condition and of every size are packed on the same shelf. What you imagine to be disorder is really order of a rational kind. Blackie's books are not for show but for use, and they are classified not by size or binding but according to their subjects. One large section is devoted to the literature of modern Greece—the finest collection of its kind in the country, since transferred to Edinburgh University—and some of these books are probably lying out on the Professor's desk or on the great working table that occupies so much of the room. The Professor keeps up a rattling monologue as he moves about the room. If you really prefer a dialogue he will listen attentively and answer relevantly, no matter how young or insignificant you are; not all great men are so considerate! If, as is

likely, you have come to listen and to look, you have time enough to do so. You see before you, if you keep your eyes moving, a lithe and erect though only middle-sized man; with hair of the whitest and silkiest, and plenty of it; with a splendid brow, grey eyes twinkling with merriment or flashing with scorn, a perfect Grecian nose, firm lips and chin; altogether a face expressing immense power,—clean-shaven, and undoubtedly handsome. He wears a long blue dressing-gown, or perhaps a brown velvet jacket, and in any case a long red sash round his waist; with a large turned-down collar, described, I believe, as Shakespearean. In a corner you may discover the big-brimmed soft straw hat that he always wears when at work, to shade his eyes—which repaid his care by never needing glasses as long as he lived.

By this time, let us hope, the other Hellenists have assembled. Lord Neaves is sure to be there: the “Beta” of “Blackwood’s Magazine,” a writer of *vers de société* and Latin songs, a man of widely-varied culture. Dr. Donaldson, too, is a most

regular attendant. He has been at the High School since 1856, and its rector since 1866; author of "The Critical History of Christian Literature and Doctrine"; one of the first scholars in the country; "a granite-headed Scot," as Blackie calls him—

Hard and keen,  
A granite block from granite Aberdeen.

Then there are Sir Noel Paton, though not a Hellenist; Erskine of Linlathen; Professor Sellar, author of the "Augustan Poets"; Dr. John Muir—"Sanscrit Muir"; David Masson, Professor of English Literature; Dr. Clyde, of the Academy; Dr. Andrew Wood, the translator of Horace; Dr. Lindsay Alexander, the Congregational minister, strong in theology and moral philosophy; Dr. Walter C. Smith, the Free Church poet—always some of these, and four or five of Blackie's best Greek students.

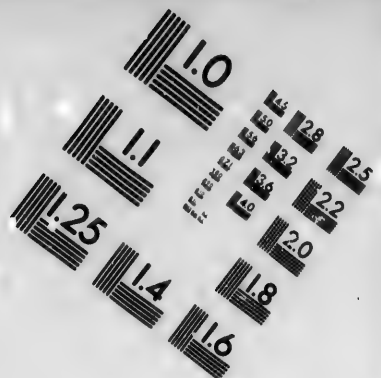
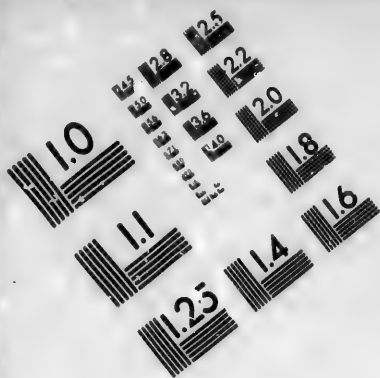
For two hours some old Greek author has the honour of being read and translated and discussed by such men as these. The seniors do the talking, the juniors

content to read their allotted page and catch the sparks of inspiration that fly to and fro : for great is the whetting of the wits. Blackie, of course, is chief speaker. He has affinities with every one in the room—with the poet, the philologist, the divine, the philosopher, the teacher, the artist. There is scarcely a subject on which he can throw no light ; but he is far, indeed, from thinking himself infallible, speaks with notable modesty of his own researches, and turns up a word in the dictionary rather than press his interpretation on a doubter. And how he reads ! “It was wonderful,” says a learned friend, after thirty years in which to forget if he could ; “I never heard any one read like him. It was a chorus of Aristophanes, and the way in which he united accent and ‘quantity’ was marvellous. It was all so musical.”

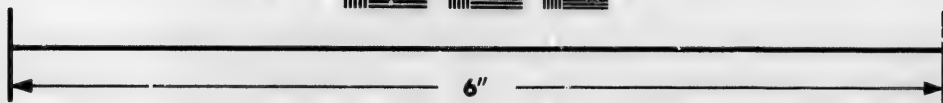
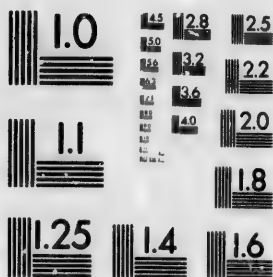
The two hours fly, Aristophanes retires to his shelf, and “the Professor leads the way upstairs to where a sumptuous supper has been spread under the eye of Mrs. Blackie, who places herself, like a speaker of the House of Commons, at the head

of the table, a silent, much-respected—perhaps much-needed—restraining influence. Song alternates with debate; and the Professor, goaded by a remark from an ex-Professor of Divinity as to the pre-eminence of Mill as a moralist, will strike out ferociously against the Utilitarians, and wither up their principle by sarcastically referring to it as the greatest happiness of ‘the greatest number: greatest number—Number One!’ Or, again, he will be lashed into fury by the suggestion of some one that the personality of Homer is a myth, and inveigh savagely against Wolf and the whole tribe of Separatists; which, in turn, will lead him to expatiate on the higher systematising proclivities of the Germans. Or he will troll forth in lusty tones ‘The Quaker’s Wife,’—his father’s favourite, with the son’s additions—“‘The Maid of Dalnacorra,’ ‘A Song of Good Conservatives,’ or the ‘Herr Philister.’”

Once, when roused to an extra pitch of eloquence on some burning question, the Professor wound up his speech by falling on his knees beside the wife of a reverend

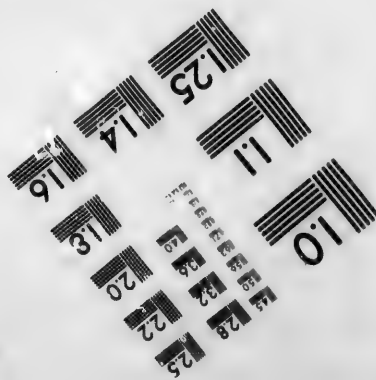
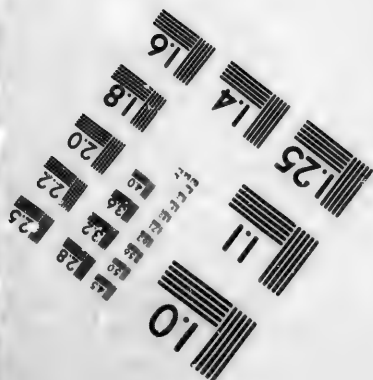


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Hellenist and kissing her hand, while her daughter's cheek received a similar salute. This was the unique prerogative of a unique man, and none of his friends grudged it. What would have been indignantly resented from anyone else was felt to be perfectly natural and delightful from the chivalrous, pure-hearted, and loving Professor.

At another of these festivals a young politician was present who had just recanted his Conservatism and formally joined the Liberal party. Blackie surprised the company by making a speech in praise of the young "'vert" (the reader can supply the prefix). The Professor even declared that he himself, though flourishing his stick in Mr. Gladstone's face on election cartoons, had found it time to turn Liberal! And this brings us to another chapter.

#### XIV.

#### HIS POLITICS.

Forty years ago, "when the nation had entered on the Crimean war, and all Europe was excited and expectant, Blackie got up and said something which seemed a little unacademic at a large University function. When a few voices were heard in discord with what he had said, he replied, swinging his arms about, 'What! do you think I am one of those gerund-grinders who can keep his academic soul unruffled by the war breeze which is sweeping over Europe?' This was like Blackie," adds Professor Laurie, who tells the story. It was like Blackie to take a citizen's interest in the affairs of the State; yet he had the impartiality of a mere spectator—impartiality, not neutrality. He could throw himself into a political fight, but never into a political party. At one time he was to be seen

battling shoulder to shoulder with the Tories, and at another with the Liberals—it all depended on what they were fighting for at the moment. His most famous appearances in the political arena were as champion of the constitution against democracy, and as champion of Scottish Home Rule and the Scottish peasantry against landlordism and centralisation. These appearances did not represent different stages of Blackie's political development. The two positions were held at the same time.

The famous debate to which the Professor alluded at his breakfast-table was held on two successive nights in January, 1867, at the Edinburgh Music Hall. In a lecture to working-men a few weeks before he had challenged any democratic champion to meet him in single combat, and Ernest Jones picked up the glove. In the discussion that followed, as on all other occasions, Blackie was perfectly frank. He did not, like some Tory politicians, attempt to clothe the naked Toryism of his doctrine with professions of respect for the democratic principle. It



FROM A POLITICAL CARTOON, 1880.

was the democratic principle he explicitly denounced, and especially its embodiment in the Reform Bill of that period. He had no objection to give a large increase of voting power to the working men, many of whom he described as more intelligent and trustworthy in a political capacity than some classes of those immediately above them in the social scale. But to determine all public questions by the votes of the majority was to him "the rule of unreason." He would balance the democratic force by giving special representation to "the natural, moral, and intellectual aristocracy of the community."

About seventeen years ago a presumptuous young man wrote to Professor Blackie expostulating with him for publicly supporting the Tory candidate at a bye-election in the West of Scotland. The Professor did not throw the letter into the fire. He sat down and covered eight pages of letter paper with "political maxims" for his young friend's benefit. Here are a few of them:—

"A horse requires a rein as well as a spur; and a coachman is not wise who

flings away the drag because he is not now going down hill.

"If the Tories are the stupid party in the State, the Liberals are the feverish party. To over-stimulated brains a little stupidity may sometimes be conducive to health.

"If in domestic progress the chief honours belong to the Liberals, the Tories show their talent in the greater force and vigour of their foreign policy.

"The Liberals and the Tories are equally factious, struggling for power. Those who are stirred by the passions which inspire these parties vote systematically *with* their party; those who are free from those passions—that is, true patriots—vote *for* their country.

"Liberty is a snare; Equality a lie, and Fraternity a dream.

"Liberty is like wine: a little is good; much of it is dangerous."

To these let us add a motto which he never left long unspoken—"All extremes are bad"; and this sentence from his "Self-Culture": "A good man will as much as possible strive to be

shaken out of himself, and learn to study the excellences of persons and parties to whom he is naturally opposed."

He believed in Liberty as necessary to free men "from those artificial bonds and hindrances to normal development, with which insolent power, official formalism, or ossified institutions may have enthralled them." Moreover, as he said in the last article he wrote, "in all forms of government, whether political or ecclesiastical, absolute power is a weapon too strong to be used wisely by a feeble human arm." But "it is not freedom but the use of freedom that ennobles man. Savages and nomads have always more freedom than civilised societies."\*

As for Equality, here is an illustration of its non-existence: "Take a class, we shall say, of one hundred young men learning Greek in the University of Edinburgh: my experience is that out of these one hundred there will be only one man of decided eminence, and not more than half-a-dozen of superior talent; and that the difference between those who have

\* *Essays on Social Subjects.*



least and those who have most will be much greater at the end of six months' teaching than it was at the beginning."\*

You see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,  
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;  
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,  
He's but a coof for a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Their dignities and a' that,  
The rank is but the guinea stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that!

"The man who wrote this," said Blackie, "was the prophet of democratic equality in the only true sense. So, also, was the Apostle Peter. 'Honour all men' in their several places, and in the performance of their several functions; but in no wise worship rank. Specially, as St. Paul has it, 'Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.'"+ "Fix this in your minds, before all things, that there are few things in social life more contemptible than a rich man who stands upon his riches. He acquires a certain social position, and from this perhaps gets M.P. tagged to his name; but take the

\* Political Tracts, 1868: "On Government."

† Essays on Social Subjects.

creature down from his artificial elevation and look him fairly in the face, and you will find that he is a figure too insignificant to measure swords with." \*

The House of Lords, with its existing constitution "repugnant alike to the plainest dictates of common-sense and the spirit of the age," Blackie declared to be an anomaly which, "even in this land of multifarious anomalies, will not bear a moment's consideration." And yet, he continued, "I believe that an Upper House founded on common-sense principles, such as the Roman Senate and the Spartan *γερονσια*, is absolutely necessary for the safety and the soundness of legislation; and I am convinced, with Aristotle, that all extremes are wrong, and that for this reason any democratic body is then best when it acts under the check of an aristocratic body, while in the same way every aristocratic body then commands the greatest amount of influence when it is wisely seasoned by an infusion of the democratic element. Let, then, the House of Lords have the

\* Self-Culture.

sense and the courage to reform themselves on the principles of Aristotle and common-sense, and all the Radicals in Oldham and Birmingham will not be able to prevail against them." "I am not a Radical," he once said, "but I see that some things are radically wrong."

Fraternity might be a dream, an ideal, but it was one which his religion held up for realisation. In "Four Phases of Morals" the author says:—"If there is only one God, the Father of the whole human race, then there is only one family; all men are brethren; nationality ceases; philanthropy, or love of men in the widest sense of the word, becomes natural; mere patriotism has now only a relative value."

Blackie had no more admiration for the doctrines of modern socialism than for the shibboleth of the French Revolution. But he had much sympathy for those who are trying to bring fraternity out of dream-land. Writing to an ardent if not very theoretical socialist a couple of years ago he said, "I have read your article with full assent. The great difficulty in

organising society is to reconcile a certain systematic enforced order with that greatest possible number of the greatest variety of free individuals which, so far as one can see, is the principle on which the creative Force in this wonderful world proceeds. Christianity has now been on the field as the prime mover in all social matters for nearly 2,000 years; and yet how little of that *ἀγάπη* asserts itself in our social surroundings, which, as St. Paul says, is the *πλήρωμα νόμου*."

"You cannot honour all men," he said, many years ago, "unless you try to know all men; and you know no man till you have looked with the eye of a brother into the best that is in him."\*

The extreme individualist was as far as the extreme socialist from Blackie's standpoint. "With your proudest pretensions and highest accomplishments you remain a very small creature in a very big world, and no more capable of standing alone or acting merely for yourself than a single note is in a harmony over which the constructive genius of a Beethoven or a

\* Self-Culture.

Wagner presides." He was delighted to see the property of the individual drawn upon for the benefit of the community, and especially for large and imperial purposes. "Taxes," he declared, in one of his twenty-four maxims, "are one of the grand distinctions between civilised men and savages." "The progress of civilisation in its natural and healthy career is the progress of limitation and the curtailment in various ways of that freedom which originally belonged to every member of the community."\*

Freedom to get as much out of another man, in the form of labour or rent, as he can be driven to yield, is no man's right. "Pay a man fairly, according to the quantity and quality of the work done—this is simply justice; pay him a little more, and justice rises into the region of Christian love; while anything like squeezing out of the labourer the greatest possible amount of labour for the lowest possible wage is in the highest degree both inhuman and un-Christian."†

\* What does History Teach?

† Essays on Social Subjects.

With this notable declaration we may end the chapter: "In all cases of general discontent, social fret, and illegal violence, the parties who are accused of stirring class against class are not the agitators who appear on the scene, but the maladministrators who made their appearance necessary. . . . There is no truth in the philosophy of history more certain than that whenever the multitude of the ruled rebel against their rulers, the original fault—I do not say the whole blame—but the original fault and germinative cause of discontent and revolt unquestionably lies with the rulers."

## XV.

### THE HIGHLANDERS' CHAMPION.

OF all the chapters of an always honourable career, this one deserves to be printed in letters of gold: the story of his fight for the Highland peasantry. He carried on the struggle with none but the highest motives—brotherly love for the weak and oppressed, combined with patriotic jealousy for the honour and interests of his country and the empire at large. He was content to forfeit the friendship of some whom he honoured, rather than slacken his zeal in a cause which demanded the fervour of a prophet. Nevertheless, his words were not more vigorous than the cause was urgent. His denunciations were not indiscriminate, and his judgments were tempered by charity.

It is nearly half-a-century since Blackie stepped into the vacant position of the Crofters' Champion. His early explora-

tions of the Highlands brought him face to face with evils which no appeal to conventional phrases or unjust laws could excuse. On one of his expeditions from Aberdeen, for instance, he came to "Aultnaharra, almost the very central point of Sutherlandshire, and, resting there for a night, next day walked down the whole length of bonnie Strathnaver to the sea. During this walk," he tells us, "I came upon vast heaps of the ruined clachans, whence the people had been driven to make way for the economical reform commonly called the big farm system; and, when arrived at the bottom of the strath on the seacoast, I found myself in the midst of one of those marine cities of refuge into which the ousted crofters had been huddled; those of them at least who had not found their way to America.

"Bonnie Strathnaver! Sutherland's pride,  
Sweet is the breath of the birks on thy side;  
But where is the blue smoke that curled from the  
glen  
When thy lone hills were dappled with dwellings  
of men?" \*

\* Lays of the Highlands and Islands.



He found, as he says, a certain relief to his sorrow in lyrical utterance; but a friend suggested that he should send a plain prose statement of the case to "The Times." This he did, and a leading article was published in consequence. Considerable search has failed to identify this article; but a stirring "leader" appeared on June 4th, 1845, after a Special Commissioner of the paper had investigated the clearance of Glen Calvie. This event "The Times" denounced as an "inhuman process," a case of "heartless oppression," and not distinguishable from hundreds of others. As soon as it became known that Professor Blackie had taken up the question, he found his breakfast-table loaded day after day with accounts from all parts of the world describing "the process by which the very pith and marrow of rural life in the Highlands had been sacrificed to economic theories alike inhuman and impolitic." The more he saw and inquired, the more keenly he felt the bitter injustice and the folly of destroying our reserves of manhood. Here are two scraps of letters, the first from

Braemar in the forties, and the second from Oban in 1869:—"The only drawback to the beauty of the Highlands with me—and it is a great one—is the diminution of the population, and the dominance of an overgrown landed aristocracy, which cares more for deer than for men, and has, in the space of a single generation, been willing to forget the splendid services which these poor despised cotters did to our country in Spain and at Waterloo." "The one-sided, loveless policy of a certain school of economists, acting along with the stupidity and greed of landlords, has 'improved' this country into a solitude that pays the rent; without life or love, or memory or hope. We have lost our people: and Bens and glens, which satisfy the painter's eye, cannot feed the human heart. However, I make the best of it, being convinced that all grumbling is sin."

His way of making the best of it was to make it better. His tongue and pen, busy as they were with other affairs, were placed freely at the service of the Highlanders. No small share of the

credit for the Crofters' Commission and the resulting legislation—imperfect as that legislation still is—belonged to the Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh. He was not carried off his feet by sentiment. He recognised that “there were, and there still may be, cases where a certain amount of emigration is as beneficial to those who leave the country as to those who remain in it. But weeding is one thing, and extirpation is another.”\* “The sacrifice of the Highlanders to the selfishness or carelessness or ignorance of landlords armed with partial and one-sided land laws, and to a political economy, falsely so called, which mistakes the wealth of the few for the well-being of the many, is one of the greatest blots on the face of our modern civilisation. That is the decided sentence of Sismondi, Roscher, and other Continental economists who have preserved their minds untainted by that commercial spirit which in this country has turned political economy into a pretentious

\* Lays of the Highlands and Islands,

sophistry for the purpose of giving scientific names to the most heartless forms of social selfishness." "It is a very sad business, and not calculated to excite in the beholder a very high idea of the capability of the British Government to perform the highest function of all government—the protection of the weak against the strong."

He refused to tar all landlords with the same brush, and one of his books dealing largely with this subject—"Altavona," published by Mr. Douglas in 1882—was written in dialogue to ensure the presentation of both sides.

Throughout he acted on the principle that "offence, though it must sometimes be given, ought never to be courted. Nevertheless," as he well said, "there are occasions when a man must speak boldly out, even at the risk of plucking the beard of fair authority somewhat rudely. If he does not do so he is a coward and a poltroon, and not the less so because he has nine hundred and ninety-nine lily-livered followers at his back." \* In this

\* Self-Culture.

spirit he wrote the famous sonnet on  
"Absentee Proprietors":—

Who owns these ample hills? A lord who lives  
Ten months in London, and in Scotland two;  
O'er the wide moors with gun in hand he drives:  
And, Scotland, this is all he knows of you!  
Your tongue, your thoughts, your soul, are  
strange to him;

Your faith, your courage and your patience true  
Touch him as near as when with hasty limb  
He brushes from his boot the mountain dew.  
Your sober church, your priestless sacraments  
He loveth not who loveth these—to kill  
The guarded game and swell the squandered rents.  
These be thy masters, Scotland! These the men  
Who make thy people vanish from the glen! \*

Blackie's most important work on this subject is one which students of the land question cannot afford to leave unread. It was published in 1885 under the title "The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws; an Historico-Economical Inquiry," and was dedicated "To John Bright, the eloquent denouncer of Irish wrongs." Some idea of the severe and thorough research that went to the making of this valuable book may be got from the fact

\* Lays and Legends; and in *Messis Vitæ*.

that the author read all the books and pamphlets he could get on rural economy and the land laws, inquired systematically into the rural economics and agrarian legislation of various countries of Europe, and made journeys of investigation to the Channel Islands, to Ireland, and to Italy: "the analogy of the usurpation of the lands of the Italian yeomanry by the aristocracy in the latter days of the Roman Republic, with the consequent patriotic struggle of the Gracchi to restore the land to the people," having flashed with a painful vividness on his mind.

Blackie was not very hopeful of success in this crusade, and even the report of the Crofters' Commission was an agreeable surprise to him. "The report," he wrote to a correspondent in Canada, "is much more kindly than I expected, thanks to Lord Napier, who has lived too long in India to have his type of social philosophy made after the image of John Bull's insular tradition. Whether anything will be done is a different question. Our Government never does a thing because it

ought to be done, but because they are forced to do it. In Ireland the force was strong enough to wrench justice from them; in the Highlands, I fear, it will prove too weak. They will likely let the report lie on the table and do nothing, as they did many years with the Irish reports before Gladstone forced justice down their throats."

Legislation came, as we know. It did not meet all the country's requirements, or rise to Professor Blackie's standard. "If we had a Moses or Lycurgus amongst us he would undoubtedly enact—(1) That all deer forests, as luxuries of the richest class of society, should be severely taxed;" (2) that the animals should all be well fenced in from the crops of their human neighbours; and (3) that a Government Board should keep such forests within their natural bounds, and prevent them encroaching on land "that could be profitably occupied by a rural population." "Property in land is in an altogether different position from property in movables;" it "exists," as he had said elsewhere, "for the sake of the people."

"It is not the primary business of a landholder to make money," but to "support upon his property as large an amount of a rural population as it can conveniently maintain." The land laws of Scotland, being "made by the landlords, in the interest of their own class mainly," had fostered a mercantile notion that a landlord "could do what he liked with his own";\* an entirely damnable doctrine, but one that the people might now demolish without further help from a Greek professor. In a letter written early in 1886 he says: "The Highlanders may now be left to speak for themselves, having half a dozen of M.P.'s of their own choice; and I hope they will have sense to desire only what is reasonable and practicable, and not follow their Irish cousins in demanding that the existing world shall be turned upside down and inside out for their convenience. I mean now to let them look for help to their own kin and clan."

\* Appendix to his inaugural address as Chief of the Gaelic Society at Perth, October 7th, 1880. (Douglas.)



## XVI.

### THE CELTIC CHAIR.

BLACKIE's sayings and doings for the Highlanders cannot aptly be told in a single chapter. His indignation at their material woes was not more fruitful than his sorrow for their disappearing language and neglected literature.

"There are very few districts of my native land," the Professor was able to say at the age of sixty-three, "from the green graves of the two drowned Margarets in Wigtown to the bleak and black savageness of Cape Wrath, and the Fuggla Rock in Shetland, which I have not visited." But the Lowlander by birth was a Celt by temperament, a Highlander at heart, and he found his divinest inspirations in the mountain air. "The features of many of our most beautiful Highland districts, under their most beautiful aspects, with all the best emotions

which a familiarity with them can create, and all the patriotic associations with which they are intertwined, have become part of my life and of the atmosphere which I breathe." \*

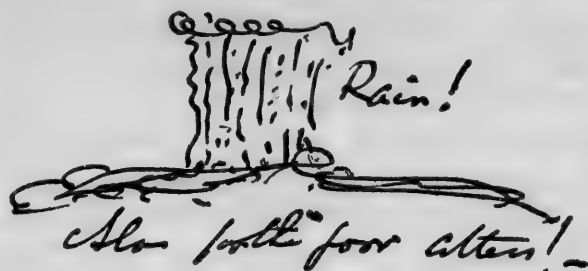
For many years the Professor and Mrs. Blackie spent their summers on the west coast, at Oban. There they built a house in 1865, with the sea and the isles in front, the moors and the mountains in rear. Indeed, he once responded at a Highland gathering to the toast of the Highland landlords—his qualification being the ownership of the acre bearing his Highland home. He called it Altnacraig, "the stream by the rock." Beside the splendour of shore and ocean, inland beauties paled. "I am delighted to hear you are so satisfied with the beauty of Aberfeldy," he wrote from Oban to a friend deep in the heart of Perthshire; "but if you come here you will see THE BEAUTIFUL + THE SUBLIME = PERFECTION!" The village of Aberfeldy itself annoyed him, as a blot on the face of fair Strath-Tay; for twenty years ago there was

\* Lays of the Highlands and Islands.

"only one handsome building in it," he declared, "the new Independent Church, with which, thank God, I had something to do that will mingle with a sweet echo in my deathbed hymn." But Aberfeldy became pretty familiar with the Professor's "Ciamar tha sibh 'n diugh?" and the village streets were picturesque at any rate when he marched through them. The "breastful of good-natured scolding" that he gave them as a lecture, while on a visit to "that dashing Amazon, the Countess of Breadalbane," and the little skirmish with his Highland brother-in-law over the Celtic superstitions which the minister's minister-father had done much to dispel, are shining items in the annals of the place.

He was very happy at Oban. He rejoiced in forest and flower, sea and rock, storm-wrack and sunshine. "The sea is roaring like a cauldron," he writes with gusto, "the white crests chasing one another like snowdrifts; the trees tossing their arms like frantic women in a shipwreck, and the windows of Heaven are opened indeed." "After a few days' cessation the

Prince of the Power of the Air is again exercising his function here most diabolically." To himself this was a small matter, but "Alas for the poor cotters!" Here is a scrap of this letter in facsimile, as it was not often the Professor turned artist:



He rejoiced, too, in some of the human creatures who flocked to Oban—his own presence being one of the attractions. "From all parts of the world," he writes in 1869, "everybody comes to Oban. We have had President Davis here, and Dean Stanley, and Lady Augusta Stanley, and a host of minor notabilities. Dr. Caird, the great preacher, lives in a neighbouring mansion. He is really a great preacher: force, dignity, grace, and substantiality. His brother, the Professor of Moral Philo-

sophy in Glasgow, is also here—a great Anglican. Dr. Norman Macleod was near us for six weeks. I had a glorious meeting with him, when he sang some excellent songs of his own composition—one especially of which the text was the amount of suggestive wisdom and profound philosophy which lies in the wagging of a dog's tail." This was the man whose biography the Professor once described as "an ocean of splendour: St. Paul + Aristophanes"; and whose "Annals of a Highland Parish," Blackie said, "are replete with more of the fresh breath, vivid colouring, and stirring action of a thoroughly manly style of life than any that I know outside of Homer."

It was from Oban that Blackie used to go off for a fortnight's walk on what he called "the one-shirt expedition." There was not a high mountain in Scotland that he did not get to the top of, at some time or other; and the "Lays of the Highlands and Islands," which he published—with some instruction on geology and other useful matters—for the benefit of tourists, were composed, he tells us, "with no con-

scious purpose at all, but merely to pour forth the spontaneous happy moods of my own soul, as they came upon me during many years' rambling among the Bens and Glens of my Scottish fatherland."

On one of these "frequent vagabond flights through the Highland hills," he says, "I took up my quarters for some weeks at Kinloch-Ewe, and then and there I picked up my first mustard-seed of the rare old language."\* The Professor was by this time about fifty-five—an elderly man, as years go. He never acquired a perfect Highland accent; but the fact that he mastered the Gaelic when far past middle life is a striking sign of his irresistible will, his wise methods, and his natural gifts. As far back as 1831, when he came home from the Continent, he could freely speak Latin, Greek, Italian, German, English, and even French, though it was "too snippy, scrappy, and polished" for his taste—and all had been acquired in the same natural way. He added Gaelic to his

\* Language and Literature of the Scottish Highlands.

list by talking with the Gaels, and then he plunged into their literature with the zest of an explorer opening a new continent. "I can see him now," says Dr. Macgregor, "walking along the shores of the loch with a Gaelic book and dictionary in his hand." Blackie never despised the dictionary, Greek or Gaelic. He found his new language "not harsh and unpronounceable," as some imagine who judge by its spelling, "but soft, vocalic, mellifluous," and specially adapted for music. "Highland songs," he discovered, "beat English and German hollow for variety and character." As for Ossian's poems—the only piece of Gaelic literature of which the Southerner has heard—Blackie arrived at the rational belief that they were "in the main, both in tone and materials, much more ancient than Macpherson's time." He laughed at the "absurdity of pious trifling" that seriously derives "Jehovah" from the Gaelic Dhe (meaning God), Tha (is), and Bha (was); but he could honestly admit that Gaelic was "one of the oldest and least mongrel types of the great Aryan family of

speech." As long ago as 1864 he opened his Greek class for the Session by a lecture on "The Gaelic Language: Its Classical Affinities and Distinctive Character." "It has become impossible," as he said in a preface to a book of Gaelic conversations, "to teach any one language scientifically without having some just regard to the peculiarities of all the members of the family to which that language belongs."

In 1876 he introduced the Englishman and Lowlander to the unfamiliar beauties of the Northern tongue, in his genially erudite way, by the volume called, "The Language and Literature of the Scottish Highlands." It was not his purpose "to exhaust a subject, but only to excite an interest and open a vista"; and this he did, for many a grateful Sassenach. In the English renderings of Gaelic poetry which illustrate the work, Blackie "endeavoured to follow the spirited freedom of Dryden and our old masters, rather than the curious literalness which has been lately fashionable." But the one specimen that can find room here





ALTNACRAIG, OBAN.



is from another volume, *Altavona*. It is just a verse from his "Nutbrown Maiden," a dainty translation of "Ho-ro mo nighean donn bhoidheach":—

Her eye so mildly beaming,  
Her look so frank and free,  
In waking and in dreaming,  
Is evermore with me.

Ho-ro, my nut-brown maiden,  
Hi-ri, my nut-brown maiden,  
Ho-ro, my nut-brown maiden,  
O, she's the maid for me!

As might have been expected, the lash of Blackie's whip fell smartly on the shoulders of those Highlanders who let their mother-tongue slip from them, who at most "content themselves with vapouring about Ossian, whom they never read, and eulogising Duncan Ban, whom they do not sing."\* "They are in a great measure themselves to blame," he wrote in a letter about the same time, "for not getting the Gaelic taught in the schools." The great idea of education, the Professor saw, was to draw out of a man's soul what God put in him, namely,

\* Address to the Gaelic Society, Perth.

the best thoughts that were in his heart; and for the Highlanders that could be done best by Gaelic music, Gaelic songs, and Gaelic Bibles. But "they are overridden by strangers; fashion deludes, and necessity compels. They call their own language 'common and unclean' (Acts x. 14), and whosoever presents himself to be kicked in this world will surely get kicks enough." In face of the betrayal and ejection of the people by their landlords, and the desertion of their language and customs by the people themselves, the annual "Gathering" got up "for the amusement of tourists, deerstalkers, and absentee lairds," was to Blackie but "a silly thing; not silly in itself, but because it has no real life and soul in it." Writing to his sister, who had invited him to visit her in Wales, he said: "The Eisteddfod is a gathering intellectually and morally far superior to our Highland exhibitions of the same kind; for the Welsh are a people, but 'the Highlands' is now only a country that lives by showing itself to shoals of idle tourists and

selling itself to a few Saxon hunters and English Nimrods. Often have I wished to be a part of such a sound-hearted popular manifestation: but it is a popular error largely entertained in regard to your excellent brother that he is possessed of ubiquity. The fact is I am no more possessed of ubiquity than a flea: though both of us, I confess, are very mobile little animals, and not very easy to catch."

If he could not stir up the degenerate Highland imagination to a revival of the Gaelic speech, Blackie did what mortal man could—and what most others could not—to save the language from utter oblivion. In a letter written on the 1st of December, 1867, at Kensington—he had been "seduced up here by the solicitations of the kilted Celts of London" to attend some patriotic assembly—he says: "I assisted to do a little piece of academical business besides. The academical business was, according to the suggestion of Sir Patrick Colquhoun, late Chief Judge at Ceylon, a zealous Celt, to start the idea of a Celtic Chair in some Scottish

University—if possible, Edinburgh. This I could do *con amore*, and may possibly live to see the idea realised.” Dr. James Macgregor, Professor of Theology in Edinburgh New College, made an attempt of this sort, but with next to no result. In 1870 the Council of Edinburgh University decided that a Celtic Chair was desirable, and appointed a committee on the subject. Gradually the work of the committee fell, as the work of committees has a habit of falling, into the hands of a single member,—in this case the Professor of Greek, whom a kinsman accordingly sketched in kilts, thus :—



With Celtic impetuosity and Saxon perseverance Blackie carried this new mission to complete success. The amount of work, not always of the pleasantest, required for the collection of a £12,000 endowment fund is not to be expressed in words. Only an amateur collector of voluntary taxation who has tried to raise £200 for some object less urgent than the relief of sickness and starvation can realise a sixtieth part of the Professor's labour. If anything could have cured him of his epistolary propensities, it would have been the years he spent in the wholesale manufacture of begging-letters. But so far was he from tiring at his task, or suffering his genius to lag and his phrases to sink into the hackneyed commonplaces of mendicity, that his latest appeals rose into Blackian verse. Look at this for a begging-letter in excelsis :—

" 24, HILL STREET, 29th March.

" *Noblesse oblige !* the Frenchman says,  
Which means, who stands in honour *pays* ;  
And still, the more he rises, he  
Must pay more tax for his degree.  
So, COLSTON, you, some time ago

Known but as *Bailie*, meek and low,  
Now mounted high, and proud to stand  
With all the learned of the land ;  
In academic Court assessor,  
No Principal, preacher, or professor  
Can outshine you ; therefore, I say,  
'Tis plain, my dear sir, you must *pay*.  
Which means, of course, for me, you must  
Grandly fling down the shining dust,  
With Earls and Marquises and Dukes,  
And West-End swells of lofty looks,  
And learned scholars crammed with books,  
And Judges wigged with whalebone hair,  
And kilted Thanes and ladies fair,  
All proud a patriotic part to bear  
In building up the CELTIC CHAIR !—J. S. B.

“In your position of assessor you cannot subscribe less than £5 5s., nor go beyond £25, for £50 would be assuming the dignity of Earls, and £100 would mingle you with Dukes ! The only cause of the delay in constituting the Chair is our wise caution in providing a gentlemanly salary. Ill-paid Chairs are open to jobbery ; and are, in fact, a bribe to inferior men. I am, therefore, still seeking occasional subscriptions, and shall account myself honoured by your patronage.—Ever yours sincerely, J. S. BLACKIE.”



As Bailie Colston replied in metre to match, the Professor honoured him with a poetic receipt thus:—

“6th April, 1881.

“Received from Bailie Colston, *five*  
*Guineas*, to keep old lore alive,  
That philologic poor may thrive  
On learned honey in Celtic hive.  
Some men believe in princes; I  
Henceforth on Bailies will rely,  
With Bailie Colston in the van,  
To fork out like a gentleman  
What he can spare,  
To memorise the Celtic Clan  
By *Celtic Chair*.

“J. S. BLACKIE,

*“Solicitor-General for the Highlands.”*

He cast his nets far and wide. Not his friends only, but his friends' friends, were laid under contribution; that is, if they were Scotsmen, for at least in one case Blackie refused an introduction to an Englishman with £20,000 a-year. As long as seven years before Bailie Colston received his poetic honours the Professor had been writing thus to his brother-in-law:—

“MY DEAR THEOLOGIAN! D.D.! D.D.!!

“I am appearing in the fifth act of my

life-drama, in the character of a Beggar-Apostle, . . I only wish to know whether you can lay your finger on any MAC with large heart and open purse, and not frosted by vulgar Scotch utilitarianism, who will help me in this matter. It is an affair which depends on the intelligent enthusiasm of individuals; not on the righteousness of the *οἱ πολλοί* or the patronage of the Scribes and Pharisees.—Ever yours, JOHN S. BLACKIE.

“P.S.—Our University is in a wonderful flow of prosperity this year: nearly 1,900 enrolled already! Very opportune for me, as I had £100 to pay for my last book [*Horæ Hellenicæ*] and have to pay £100 a year for” a certain benevolent object, “with £50 to the Celtic Chair, and half-a-dozen more such affairs.”

Blackie's red-hot enthusiasm kindled some dusky glow in every Scottish heart, and in a great many the fire of fruitful gratitude. The cause and its champion appealed effectively to great and small. Poor Highland farmers and their wives sent shillings, and Her Majesty sent £200. When the Professor was in the thick of

this patriotic business, the Duke of Argyll asked him to Inverary Castle to meet the Queen. "After dinner," wrote the Professor, describing the occasion to his sister, "without any drinking, we retired to the drawing-room, and had only been there a few minutes when in came the Duke of Argyll with the Queen, and said, 'The Queen, Professor Blackie,' and 'Professor Blackie, the Queen,' and Professor Blackie, of course, made a most graceful inclination of his small body, to which Majesty replied by a most gracious smile of her good-humoured face. She asked about the Celtic Chair, and I answered in the most easy way with rose-colour replies. The dear Princess Louise was standing beside, and asked me how I expected to get the rest of the money, to which I replied, 'Faith removes mountains.' That is all. Her Majesty went about talking with Lord Dufferin and other notables, and then, like the ghosts in tragedy, made her exit by the same door through which she had entered. In about half an hour afterwards the dearly-beloved Marchioness brought me the Queen's book

into which she gets the names of persons whom she delights to honour, with their birthday and autograph, and requested me to add my name to the illustrious list. Of course I did so in the most proudly-modest way possible, and not only gave my name, but wrote beneath it two mottoes for the edification of Majesty, the one in Greek, the other in Gaelic. The Greek one was ‘χαίρειν μετὰ χαϊρόντων, καὶ κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων’—‘Rejoice with those that do rejoice and weep with those that weep’—and the Gaelic was ‘Cruaidh mar am fraoch, buan mar an darach,’ which, being interpreted, means ‘Hard as the heather and lasting as the oak.’ This was the Second Act. Afterwards the dear Princess—whom I love as warmly as a Professor is entitled to love a Marchioness—informed me that Her Majesty had expressed great satisfaction with my mottoes. That is the Third Act, and, as Aristotle says, three is the first number that has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and so makes a complete whole. . . P.S.—The Celtic Chair is now £6,500.”

The Queen, as might be imagined,

fully realised and appreciated Professor Blackie's life-long work on behalf of everything identified with the nationality of Scotland, and joined in the universal regret at the loss which his country sustained by his death.

By the spring of 1880 Blackie was able to report to the Edinburgh University Council that £12,528 had been obtained and invested. He recommended that no immediate appointment should be made, so that the money might accumulate for a while. He anticipated that the students would not be very many, and that they would be the poorest in the University. Fees, therefore, could only supplement to a very small extent the Professor's salary. It was not till 1882 that the Chair of "Celtic Languages, History, Literature, and Antiquities" was actually instituted. The patrons, consisting of the Curators of the University and Blackie himself—now an ex-Professor—elected Mr. Donald Mackinnon, M.A., to the Chair, which he has ably filled ever since. The class has been well attended, and the Professor is a regular con-

tributor to periodical literature on Celtic subjects.

"What I have done in this cause," wrote Blackie when near the end of the Celtic campaign, "has been an episode in my life into which I was drawn by external circumstances over which I had no control, and by deep moral instincts that are stronger than circumstances; but there is no act of my life on which, now that the thing is done, I look back with greater satisfaction. It was a sad thing for me to hear the poor Highlanders, just because they were poor, hardly ever mentioned except to be made the subject of vulgar jests and shallow slanders; it was a sad thing to see the systematic desolation of our beautiful glens and the dwindling away of our stoutest population; and saddest of all to contemplate the ingratitude of Britain to the men who had fought her most critical battles and performed her most glorious achievements in war, in commerce, and in geographical exploration."

## XVII.

### THE SCOTTISH NATIONALIST.

THE Professor's patriotism was never narrow, but always intense. From the day when he first exposed the educational leanness of the land, he criticised his country's defects as keenly as he praised her virtues. His appreciation, too, of the strong points in other nations was generous and sincere. John Bull himself got many a handsome compliment along with Blackie's thumping blows. What more could an Englishman desire than the description of his country in the preface to "Lays of the Highlands and Islands"? Is our country bare and barren? asks the Scottish author. Yes; with "your wide seas of luxuriant leafage, a continuity of gardens and orchards, your soft velvety lawns, your perpetual air of cleanness and comfort and shining prosperity—we willingly concede to you the privilege of

boasting that you live in the finest country in the world. Thank God, therefore, in the first place, that you were born in England; but thank Him also that you will die one day having seen Scotland. As for us, meagre mountaineers, we shall continue, with God's grace, to make the best of our granite rocks and our heather braes, turning our physical disadvantages, if we are wise, into the means of strengthening our character; for man is an animal easily spoiled by much softness."

Indeed, the Professor loved England only less than he loved Scotland; and he never hid from himself the greatness of their common interests. But in the interest of both he demanded that neither should swallow up the other or blot out its characteristic features. He was a Unionist of the most enlightened kind: for he was also a Nationalist. "Even when working with Greek and German tools," he could say, "I have always had the improvement and elevation of my country present to my mind as the only legitimate object of all foreign study."



It is many, many years since Blackie first was heard pleading with his fellow-countrymen to be what they were born—namely Scotsmen, and not to hide their natural selves in the livery prescribed by English fashion. The speech he made on “Scottish Literature” in 1861, when the foundation-stone of the Wallace Monument was laid on the crag by Stirling and Bannockburn, was a trumpet-blast of warning to his nation and defiance to its enemies. The Anglicised West-Endism of Edinburgh, as a traitor in the very citadel, had to hear many stinging truths about itself. A certain able editor had refused to join in the Monument scheme. “But the best men have their defects,” said Blackie; “the Edinburgh Whigs were always a somewhat prosaic generation, and — reads too many blue-books and lacks chivalry.” “I have never seen a more beautiful city than Edinburgh,” he said in later years, “but it is a city of big-wigs, and always looking to London for a chance of bigger!”

As one most potent means of arousing a healthy national feeling, Blackie

laboured unceasingly to revive a taste for the national songs. It was sad to think, he used to say, that he was the only Professor of Scottish song in all Scotland. At the Wallace celebration he asked why the songs of Scotland should not be habitually sung in all our highest schools, gymnasiums, and colleges. "I have a great respect," he said, "for Latin and Greek, both as a trader in that line and for philosophical reasons; but if the choice were to be made between two alternatives, classical education and Scottish song, I would say at once—burn Homer, burn Aristotle, fling Thucydides into the sea, but let us by all means on our Scottish hills and by our Scottish streams have 'Highland Mary,' 'Auld Lang Syne,' and 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled.'"

In the last year of his life, to a correspondent who had sent him a Latin poem, he wrote:—"Why should young Englishmen and Scotsmen have their ears tuned to a strange music, which is no longer the natural organ of the expression of the highest culture of the age to which they belong? Why should not our form of

expressing the beautiful be as closely connected with ourselves as the heather with the brae, the birch with the crag, and the gowan with the lea? Personally, I am not ashamed to say that I have through life got more healthy stimulus to the best part of my nature from half-a-dozen of Scottish popular songs than from all the volumes that I ever spurred my way through of Roman and Hellenic minstrelsy."

He had heard certain Scotch ladies observe that it was "vulgar" to sing Scotch songs. We should like to have heard his reply. This is the answer he gave in a public lecture afterwards:—"Is it vulgar to be true to Nature, and to call a spade a spade? Is it vulgar to be patriotic, and to love the songs and the sentiments which came to us from our father's blood and with our mother's milk? Is it vulgar to sing songs of native growth, as fresh, and bright, and strong as the purple heather on our Scottish hills—songs full of bone, and sap, and marrow, in the most musical dialect of the noble English tongue—instead of piping forth shallow sentiment-

alities to tickle the ears of prim girls and feckless fops in a big West-end drawing-room? No! No! No! I'll tell you what is vulgar: to pretend to be what you are not, and what God and Nature did not make you or intend you to be, by bedizening yourselves with strange plumes borrowed from a distance. There is nothing more vulgar than to despise the language of the common people."

Giving a pat on the back, a few years ago, to a Bailie and a Councillor who were moving the Edinburgh Police Band to play more national music, the Professor said: "In all parts of the kingdom I have never failed to find Scottish music charm the ear and stir the heart of a popular audience. Next to their quiet Sabbaths, and their personal study of the Bible, the Scottish people certainly possess no more powerful engine of the best moral culture than their rich inheritance of national song; and the most suicidal act they could commit against their noble nationality is to do anything that, either in the domain of school education or of public recreation, could be construed to imply a

misprision or a neglect of this great national treasure. The unworthy fashion of subordinating our native Scottish song to every pretty French conceit or whiff of Metropolitan sentiment that may be blown across the Border—against which I have not seldom had occasion to inveigh—is, I hope, confined to a small class of vain mothers, silly girls, shallow puppies, and other devotees of a spurious gentility in the West End of our large towns. The mass of the people is, I believe, thoroughly sound on this point; but should it unfortunately be otherwise, then let Edinburgh cease to put forward any claim to be called the capital of an independent kingdom, and have its glory in the praise of being, as the Rev. J. MacNeil wittily said, ‘the most East windy and the most West Endy’ city of the Northern province of England called Scotland.”

In his latest years Professor Blackie found a new instrument for the salvation of his country from such a doom. It was early in 1886 that an Edinburgh citizen, Mr. Charles Waddie, started what soon became known as the Scottish Home Rule

movement. Every Scotsman and every thinking Englishman admits the inconvenience—to put it mildly—of the present legislative system, under which no law, however local, can be made or altered except by a Parliament mainly representing other localities and always choked with other business. By what plan, short of disunion, can the evil of centralisation be cured? Blackie was one of those who faced this question and sought an answer. He attended the meeting in St. Andrew's Square at which the Scottish Home Rule Association was formed. At the first conference, held in Glasgow two years later, he was elected Chairman of Committee of the Association, and this post he held to the end, presiding not only at meetings in Scotland but over a conference in London itself. One of the last letters he wrote was one strongly commending the Home Rule Association and enclosing a double subscription for its treasury.

Blackie had no rigid theory, to be universally and unchangeably applied, though he believed it to be “desirable that as

much local individuality as possible should be preserved in the component parts of a great empire—as much as was consistent with unity of action and subordination to a central authority in all matters of general concern.” The neglect of this, he saw, produced a monotonous uniformity in the people, the characteristic trait of despotism. At first, indeed, the Professor was inclined to refuse to Ireland what he claimed for Scotland. Mr. Gladstone, he once said, was to be thanked for taking up the question, but not for the way in which he took it up. The process of showing in practice how good a thing local or national government was should begin, he thought, with “a sober-minded, sensible nation like the Scotch!” At another time he declared that he had nothing to do with Ireland—he did not know the Irish. He did know the Scotch, and he knew that they were fit for Home Rule and ought to have it. As for details, he felt no call to be a maker of constitutions (except, perhaps, for Hellenic societies!). Still, he had his preferences, and the plan he liked best was one first

hinted at about twelve years ago. If the present Scottish members of Parliament and representative peers were to sit together in Edinburgh for the despatch of distinctively Scottish business for six weeks or two months before their duties at Westminster began, the problem would be solved without any multiplication of legislators. Blackie came to admit that some such plan would have to be adopted for the western as well as the northern partner in the United Kingdom. He never allowed his dislike for Irish methods to modify his judgment of English methods in Ireland. Writing in 1884 to a correspondent in Montreal, he said: "As to the French in Canada, no doubt the government of one race by another is always a difficult problem; but it has constantly to be done, and we must make the best of it. In Ireland John Bull has made not the best but the worst of it; and when the worst is once produced it is, like a hereditary disease, very difficult, sometimes impossible, to be cured." And in the following letter to Mr. Blackie the publisher, written only a fortnight



before the end, he declared himself in favour of "Home Rule all round":—

"9 Douglas Crescent, Feb. 15, 1895.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Accept my best thanks for your last instalment of the History of the Scottish People. I am a strong advocate for the Union of the three Kingdoms of the Empire, but this Union should be a genuine Union of the three peoples; each with its own head—a Scottish Parliament to meet in Edinburgh, an Irish Parliament in Dublin, an English Parliament in London and a British Parliament there as well. This would be a *bond fide* Union, a brotherly Union, not a swallowing up of the smaller by the one great member, by a monstrous centralisation which is the destroyer of all variety: and variety is the wealth of the moral as well as of the physical world.—Ever yours,

"J. S. BLACKIE."

The Professor summed up his opinions on Scottish Nationality in one of his "Essays on Social Subjects," thus:—

"1. Stamp in your souls the strong conviction that, as matters now stand, there

is something rotten in the state of Scotland; and that, unless a decided stand be made at the present moment, you are in great danger of losing your two most valuable possessions—your inheritance of a distinctive type of manhood from the past, and your estimation in the eye of Europe as a political factor of no vulgar significance.

“2. Screw your middle schools and universities up to such a level as that there shall be no excuse for any father of a hopeful Scottish son saying that he sends his son to England because he cannot find for him in Scotland the education of a gentleman.

“3. Give your native Presbyterian Church services such graces and embellishments as may prevent any desertion to the Episcopacy from purely æsthetical motives.

“4. Remove the double reproach of multitudinous babblement and insolent centralisation from the British Parliament, and let Scottish business be transacted in Edinburgh, either by a separate national Parliament for Scotland, in the fashion of the States' Parliaments in

America, or, what I personally would much prefer, by a session of the Scottish members of the present Parliament of Great Britain, to be held for two months, or six weeks, as the case might require, in Edinburgh, for the despatch of specially Scotch business, with an executive, in either case resident in the historical capital of Scotland, for the administration of Scottish affairs."

## XVIII.

### POET AND VERSEMAKER.

It was not only for their effect on slumbering patriotism that Blackie loved and praised his country's songs. He found in song at once the nourishment and the expression of his highest moral qualities; and what he had found he believed that others could find. In an address to his Edinburgh students he said:—"If you wish to be happy in this world there are only three things that can secure you of your aim — the love of God, the love of truth, and the love of your fellow-men; and of this divine triad the best and most natural exponent, in my estimate, is neither a sermon, nor even a grand article in a quarterly review, but just simply a good song."

"The devil remains a stranger  
To breasts that teem with song,"

says Blackie; and he even assures us that "the devil *cannot* sing!" "There are only three patent ways," he wrote in 1887, "to keep the devil at bay—a prayer, a song, and hard work. By God's grace I use all the three largely, and so am by many accounted the happiest man in Edinburgh—an opinion which I hope is not altogether true, but has a good deal of truth in it." A severe musical critic would say that Blackie could not sing, at any rate in his later years; but it is no less true that Blackie did sing, all the time and everywhere. Dr. Macgregor and he once lived for some time together in the Highlands. "His room was next to mine," says the minister. "He sang the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. I never knew a man who more habitually carried out the Apostle's injunction, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice!' His whole life was a song. He sang to himself all day, wherever he was, on the road or in the tramway car. He sang, like the birds, because he could not help it." There we have it. Though he

rigorously did one thing at a time—"Make clean work and leave no tags" was one of his mottoes—the hardest mental labour was punctuated by snatches of song. There was no inconsistency in that. He breathed in song. Sydney Dobell was walking in his garden once when Blackie, his guest, was writing indoors. Suddenly he heard the Professor's jovial voice at an upper window troling forth :

"Maxwellton braes are bonnie  
Where early fa's the dew,  
And 'twas there that——"

Then there was a long pause while the pen sped over the paper; but at last a full stop came, and then

"——Annie Laurie  
Gi'ed me her promise true——"

Another silence, while the pen flew on; then another line or two of Annie Laurie, and so on to the end of the chapter.

He sang in private and he sang in public, and he always delighted his audience, which is more than can be said of all singers approved by the critics. In

a letter from his sister mention occurs of a visit she had just paid to her aunt, Miss Stodart, then ninety-eight years of age. The old lady was "quite bright and cheery, and said the Professor had been calling in the afternoon and had sung her a song and been in great glee," mere boy of seventy-three that he was. As for his public performances, who that ever heard him lecture on Scottish Song will forget the musical illustrations. Their style, if not inimitable, was imitable only by the late David Kennedy, whom Blackie heard singing in church one Sunday and advised to adopt the career that took him singing the songs of Scotland round the world. Who could forget the Professor's "Kelvin Grove," "A man's a man for a' that," or "The Barrin' o' the Door"?

But the Professor was a writer as well as a singer of songs; and that which he most wished to become popular may be given here in full. It was written early in the forties and appeared in his volume of "Lyrical Poems," published by Edmon-

ston and Douglas in 1860 and now out of print:—

### THE SONG OF MRS. JENNY GEDDES.

(Tune: "British Grenadiers.")

Some praise the fair Queen Mary, and some the  
good Queen Bess,  
And some the wise Aspasia, beloved by Pericles ;  
But o'er all the world's brave women, there's one  
that bears the rule,  
The valiant Jenny Geddes, that flung the three-  
legged stool.

With a row-dow—at them now !  
Jenny fling the stool !

'Twas the twenty-third of July, in the sixteen-  
thirty-seven,  
On Sabbath morn from high St. Giles' the solemn  
peal was given :  
King Charles had sworn that Scottish men should  
pray by printed rule ;  
He sent a book, but never dreamt of danger from  
a stool.

With a row-dow—yes, I trow !  
There's danger in a stool !

The Council and the Judges, with ermined pomp  
elate,  
The Provost and the Bailies in gold and crimson  
state,



Fair silken-vested ladies, grave Doctors of the  
school,  
Were there to please the King, and learn the  
virtue of a stool.

With a row-dow—yes, I trow !  
There's virtue in a stool !

The Bishop and the Dean came in wi' mickle  
gravity,  
Right smooth and sleek, but lordly pride was  
lurking in their e'e;  
Their full lawn sleeves were blown and big, like  
seals in briny pool;  
They bore a book, but little thought they soon  
should feel a stool.

With a row-dow—yes, I trow !  
They'll feel a three-legged stool !

The Dean he to the altar went, and, with a solemn  
look,  
He cast his eyes to heaven, and read the curious-  
printed book.  
In Jenny's heart the blood up-welled with bitter  
anguish full;  
Sudden she started to her legs, and stoutly grasped  
the stool !

With a row-dow—at them now !  
Firmly grasp the stool !

As when a mountain wild-cat springs on a rabbit  
small,  
So Jenny on the Dean springs, with gush of holy  
gall;

"Wilt thou say the mass at my lug, thou Popish-puling fool?"

No! no!" she said, and at his head she flung the three-legged stool.

With a row-dow—at them now!

Jenny fling the stool!

A bump, a thump! a smash, a crash! now gentle folks beware!

Stool after stool, like rattling hail, came tirling through the air,

With, Well done, Jenny! Bravo, Jenny! That's the proper tool!

When the Deil will out, and shows his snout, just meet him with a stool!

With a row-dow—at them now!

There's nothing like a stool!

The Council and the Judges were smitten with strange fear,

The ladies and the Bailies their seats did deftly clear;

The Bishop and the Dean went, in sorrow and in dool,

And all the Popish flummery fled, when Jenny showed the stool!

With a row-dow—at them now!

Jenny show the stool!

And thus a mighty deed was done by Jenny's valiant hand,

Black Prelacy and Popery she drave from Scottish land;

King Charles he was a shuffling knave, priest  
Land a meddling fool,  
But Jenny was a woman wise, who beat them with  
a stool!

With a row-dow—yes, I trow,  
She conquered by the stool!

The reader with half an imagination can picture to himself the venerable Professor, in the midst of a dramatic rendering of this ballad, seizing the nearest chair, and hurling it along the platform with an aim worthy of Mrs. Jenny Geddes herself.

In 1870, his German sympathies were roused into rhythmic force by the war with France, and he published a book on the "War Songs of the Germans, with Historical Illustrations of the Liberation War and the Rhine Boundary Question." With the prose part of the book we can have nothing to do here; but we must dip into the verse and bring out a few lines, such as these from the translation of the Sword Song:—

I in my sheath am ringing,  
I from my sheath am springing,  
Wild, wild with battle glee!

Or these, the opening lines of the "Wacht am Rhein" :—

A loud cry swells like thunder peal,  
Like roaring wave, like clashing steel—  
The Rhine, the Rhine, the German Rhine!  
Who'll come to watch the German Rhine?  
Dear Fatherland, no fear be thine:  
Brave hearts and true shall watch the Rhine!

From heart to heart the quick thrill flies,  
And lightning leaps from countless eyes,  
Where each true German, sword in hand,  
Guards the old border of the land.  
Dear Fatherland, no fear be thine,  
Brave hearts and true shall watch the Rhine!

A year before, the Professor had dedicated to the students of Edinburgh University a book of student songs called "Musa Burschicosa," the offspring of a pure spirit of enjoyment of life; and in "The Scottish Students' Song Book," published only six years ago, eight of the pieces, including a Latin version of "God Save the Queen," are by John Sturges Blackie. We must quote a very few of two of his Doric, though they may go.

This is from "Capped and Doctored  
and a'":—

I yince was a light-headed laddie,  
A dreamin' an' daunderin' loon,  
Just escaped from the rod o' my daddie  
And the skirts o' my mither's broun gown.  
But now I cut loftier capers  
An' the beer that I drink is na' sma',  
When I see my ain name in the papers,  
Capped and doctored and a'.

And this from the better-known "Sam'l  
Sumph":—

Sam'l Sumph cam' here for Greek.  
Ha, ha, the Greeking o't!  
Frae Dunnet Head he cam' for Greek.  
Ha, ha, the Greeking o't!  
Brains he had na unco' much,  
His schooling was a crazy crutch,  
But like the crab he had a clutch;  
Ha, ha, the Greeking o't!

Plucked twice, Sam'l made a pathetic  
appeal to the Professor, whose discipline  
melted under tears and let the poor fellow  
through. Now behold,

In the Kirk Assembly he  
Sits as big as big can be,  
Moderator Sam, D.D.—  
That's the crown o' the Greeking o't!

The Professor wrote much in many metres. His pen dropped into verse as naturally as his voice into song; and as he "piped more for pleasure than for fame" he disdained the chipping and changing and trimming and polishing carried on in some poetical workshops. Naturally, therefore, some of his verse lacks "distinction," and is deprived of its power over the imagination by the occasional cropping up of a phrase prosaic to the verge of commonplace. It may be urged that Blackie was too didactic to be a great poet. He himself said that "a poet even in modern times, when the great public contains every possible variety of small publics, can ill afford to be a preacher; and if he carries his preaching against the vices of the age beyond a certain length he changes his genus and becomes, like Coleridge, a metaphysician, or, like Thomas Carlyle, a prophet." No temptation would have made Blackie a metaphysician; but a prophet he was, and his message to the world was delivered in verse as often as in prose. The poetic element, however, was not always driven

out by the prophetic, or even enslaved and enfeebled by it. Some of his verses, therefore, which go to illustrate his religious teaching in the next chapter might have been given here with equal fitness to show the variety of his poetic gifts.

His earliest book of verse, published in 1857, was called "Lays and Legends of Ancient Greece." These lines may be taken as the *envoi* :—

Muse of old Hellas, wake again !  
 Thou wert not born to die—  
 And mingle sweet the classic strain  
 With Gothic minstrelsy.

Though sober friends forbid the verse,  
 My old Greek rhyme I will rehearse,  
 Like a lone wandering bee  
 On a hillside, that sips sweet dew  
 From fragrant blooms of purple hue,  
 And drones sweet minstrelsy.

The modest lay be slow to blame,  
 Piped more for pleasure than for fame :  
 Music to harmless souls belongs—  
 Cold worldly hearts are scant of songs.

About half the book consisted of "other poems," chosen from those "great screeds

of poetry" we hear of him writing under the influence of the mountain breezes when he had "shaken off the book-dust" of Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

In 1860, as we saw, came the "Lyrical Poems"; in 1869, *Musa Burschicosa*; in 1870, the German War Songs; in 1872, *Lays of the Highlands and Islands*; in 1876, "Songs of Religion and Life," some of which were reprinted from earlier volumes; in 1877 the "Wise Men of Greece," already noticed; and in 1886 "Mensis Vitæ; or, Gleanings of Song from a Happy Life," dedicated, "in the love of the good, the beautiful, and the true," to the students of the Scottish Universities. In 1889 came "A Song of Heroes," in which he "selects a sequence of the most notable names in European and West Asian history during more than 3,000 years, and gives a sketch of their lives, as the exponents of the significant ages to which they belong,"—from Abraham, Alexander, Cæsar and Paul, to Cromwell, who "seized the helm and gave it guidance with a right direct from God."

Open any of these books at random, espe-



cially the more miscellaneous volumes, and you can hardly fail to be struck by the lyrical ease and the vigour of the lines. Manliness, and warm human sympathy for all sorts and conditions of men, you will of course expect; but you may be surprised, if you have not known him well, at his genius for entering into and expressing the most varied aspects of nature, wild and magnificent or dainty and serene.

Blackie had his direct inspirations many and large. Even his adaptations and imitations are more in form than material, and the Blackie spirit glows all through them. Still, no account of his poetical works should go forth without a reference to the other poets who influenced him the most. Of great English writers, he tells us, Wordsworth held the most powerful sway over his early years. "From the day I became acquainted with Wordsworth," he says,\* "I regarded Byron only as a very sublime avatar of the devil, and would have nothing to do with him. With the years of riper manhood the

\* "Books That Have Influenced Me," in the "British Weekly."

influence of Wordsworth passed away, because I had appropriated and turned into blood and bone all the nutriment he could give me. I now sought guidance from a man who could help me to achieve for what the Germans call the objective half of my nature what the Bible and Wordsworth had done for the subjective. I saw the necessity of getting out of myself and steering free of the besetting sin of thoughtful young men, viz., philosophising about life, instead of actually living. In this my need—as Shakespeare was still too big for me—what *Deus ex machina* could have come to my aid more effective than the sunny cheerfulness, strong healthy vitality, Catholic human sympathy, deep-rooted patriotism, fine pictorial eye, and rare historic furniture of Walter Scott? To the poetry of this greatest literary Scot, whom I soon learned to associate in æsthetical bonds with the sunny sobriety of Homer and the great Greeks, I owe in no small measure that close connection with the topography and the local history of my country which appears in my poetical productions, and

which, if these are destined in any smallest degree to live in the memory of my countrymen, will be the element that has most largely contributed to their vitality."

After all, as the poet-professor knew and said, "to live poetry is better than to write it;" and he did both. "A poetical life is just a life opposed to all sameness and all selfishness; eagerly seizing upon the good and beautiful from all quarters." "What live we but for this?" he asked in one of his noblest sonnets, on the death of General Gordon:

What live we but for this?  
Into the sour to breathe the soul of sweetness,  
The stunted growth to rear to fair completeness,  
Drown sneers in smiles, kill hatred with a kiss,  
And to the sandy waste bequeath the fame  
That the grass grew behind us when we came.

## XIX.

### THE GOOD, THE TRUE, AND THE BEAUTIFUL.

It has always been a marvel that a strictly orthodox country like Scotland should have developed a love and admiration so intense for a heretic, above all for a heretic militant, whose spear was for ever pricking orthodoxy between the ribs. To explain this, it is not enough to say that his genius, his charming personality, his patriotic achievements, were allowed to cover a multitude of metaphysical sins.

"I remember," an old student says, "a good old Highlander, one of the old school of rigid Calvinists, making the remark one afternoon: 'Eh, sic a man, he's naether orthodox, nor heterodox, nor ony ither kind o' "dox," but jist himsel'.'" But being "jist himsel'" would scarcely have averted the anger of the orthodox, if he had not, as sometimes milder heretics

have not, been able to make his nation feel the essential unity between the core of his religion and of theirs.

No man ever had a more consuming abhorrence of shams, or was less hindered by conventional considerations from publicly opposing what he thought untrue. All the more significant, therefore, were those "foundations of belief" which he felt and declared to be solid under his feet. There were things which he could not understand, could not even know; but he did not make a fetish of agnosticism, persuading himself that facts as clear and powerful as any in human experience should be neglected as unknowable.

"The irreligious man," in Blackie's judgment, "is an imperfect creation; the irreligious woman is a monster." "Religion is as essential to human nature as poetry." "Atheists," he says in another place, "whether speculative or practical, are mostly crotchet-mongers and puzzle-brains; fellows who spin silken ropes in which to strangle themselves. There is something that stands above all fingering, all microscopes, and all curious diagnosis,

and that is simply LIFE; and life is simply energising Reason; and energising Reason is only another name for God." In a "Hymn for British Workmen" he wrote:—

Time was when ye were not;  
Through lightless depths forlorn  
The Eternal Father shot  
His ray, and ye were born.  
Even Him praise ye,  
Whose quickening light  
Redeems from night  
All things that be!

At a meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh five years ago a discussion arose on human evolution, and Professor Rutherford made some remark as to the possible production of thought by the evolution of molecular mechanism in the brain. Then Blackie rose. There were various kinds of nonsense, he remarked—metaphysical, theological, and scientific, and what had been talked at that meeting was scientific nonsense. Flourishing his stick and striding over to the offending physiologist, he exclaimed, "Evolution of everything out of nothing! It is utter

nonsense. Did you ever see a web without a weaver? Without God no Rutherford is possible, no Royal Society is possible." Long before, in 1856, he described himself as "wielding the cudgel for old Plato against all materialists, utilitarians, French encyclopædists, 'practical men,' and persons who have a retail trade in the tangible." But he had no quarrel with science, no desire to clip its wings: he only refused to "look for the good, the true, and the beautiful on the insides of worms and oysters."

He did not trouble himself with metaphysical problems the solution of which, if solution could be found, would have no practical result. "The Bible is a practical book," he said, "and he who does not use it practically had better not read it." Some poor brain had been puzzling over "the origin of evil." The origin of evil? said Blackie,—

Evil exists that you may make it good;  
Else had the saints on earth scant work to do!  
What would you have? In Paradise, no doubt,  
Weeds grandly grew, and Adam plucked them  
out.

Close by our door is fruitful work to do ;  
Accept the task and own the work Divine :  
Sow, plant, or build, drain fields, or cleave the  
clod,  
But spend no time in arguing with God.

The literary and theological problems so keenly discussed by Biblical critics he put aside with an equally contented mind. In a letter to his brother-in-law, who had been writing on "The Unity of Isaiah," Blackie said :—"I am a man of action, and must have terra firma to stand on, and therefore have systematically eschewed all slippery questions whether in philological criticism or theological dogma, which, however answered, can lead with me to no practical result, or, rather, from the character of my mental constitution, must end as they began—in doubt."

He was not uninterested in the study of comparative religion, however, nor incapable of forming an opinion in which common sense and learning were combined. At the foot of a letter to the same correspondent, asking information as to the religious beliefs of savage races, this postscript appears :—"Buddha certainly was



a very sublime driveller. Nothing more ridiculous than virtue when it enters into a war with nature."

The Professor's book called "Four Phases of Morals" is an elaborate comparison, full of wisdom, of the Socratic, Aristotelian, Christian and Utilitarian systems. We have heard his terse opinion of Utilitarianism. His conclusions on the subject of Christianity must be quoted. Christianity, he says, "is essentially an ethical religion; other religions favour certain virtues, or give a certain sanction to all virtues; but Christianity is morality." It "is not a special training which pious persons are to go through in order to prepare themselves for a future world." "Neither, again, does the famous doctrine of St. Paul, that men are saved by faith, not by works, in any wise contradict the essentially ethical character of the faith which he preached. The works which in the Epistle to the Romans he so unconditionally denounces are works either of self-conceit or of sacerdotal imposition." From the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, "the only part of the New Testament, by

the way, in which a formal definition of faith is given," "it is plain to any child that faith is merely a religious synonym for what we in secular language call moral heroism—a heroism peculiarly marked as Christian only by the distinct recognition on the part of the actor that the moral law which he obeys is the accredited will of the Moral Governor whom he serves."

As religion was the best of possessions, so he saw Christianity was the best of religions. But he was scrupulously fair to the religious men of non-Christian times. "I hope," he once wrote to a friend, "you will never allow yourself to speak slightingly of those noble heathens, Plato, Zeno, Socrates, and hundreds more. They were witnesses to the highest truths in a practical style from which many of our modern talking and sentimentalising evangelists might learn a great deal." Two of these noble heathen, along with a Christian apostle and a modern philosopher, supplied the mottoes with which the Professor covered the fly-leaf of an autograph book for the present writer in

1881. This is a reduced facsimile of the page:—

ΕΚ ΘΕΩΝ γὰρ ἀνέχονται πόσων  
 βροτῶν ἀρεταί· καὶ σοφοὶ  
 καὶ χροὶ βία καὶ πᾶν λυαί  
 τ' ἔχουσιν  
 ΠΙΝΔΑΡΟΣ,  
 τῶν πόθεν πωλῶντι πάντα  
 τὸ γὰρ δ' ἔστιν τοῖ θεοῖ.  
 ΕΠΙΧΑΡΗΟΣ.

Omnia huic tam difficili  
 quam tam sancti Speranza.  
Concordia non en frisch buen  
non en giullari.  
Sach fuorch.  
 Ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγαπῇ  
Paulus

The mottoes may be rendered thus:—

From heaven comes all that makes for human excellence; from the gods come wise men, and men of mighty hand and eloquent speech.

PINDAR.

It is by our work that we purchase all good things from the gods.—EPICHRMOS.

All noble things are as difficult as they are rare.—SPINOZA.

“Hard as the heather, lasting as the fir.”

GÆLIC PROVERB.

Speaking the truth in love.—PAUL.

In answer to a letter from his sister the Professor wrote :—“What you say about Psalm xxx. is true ; but not only there—everywhere in the Psalms we find piety coupled with a lusty and triumphant humanity. David was a complete MAN. Our modern religionists are too often melancholy fragments. I prefer a jolly heathen to your puling lily-livered Christians of a certain type, who count it a virtue to be always dreaming about the future world because they have not pith to live effectually in the present. *Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis !*”

It was in the daring form of a litany to that heathen saint that he flung out the sorrow of his soul for the unlovely narrowness of men who think themselves Christians. He saw the same fault in high Calvinist and high Sacerdotalist. Once

he told a story of a Highland boy, in the neighbourhood of Dingwall, to whom a young lady was showing a series of small pictures representing human figures. A grim and gigantic warrior, in the act of dealing a heavy blow with his club, caught the boy's eye, and immediately he came out with the question: "Is this God?" "A more pregnant satire," said Blackie, "on the grim theology of the Caledonian Calvinists cannot be conceived. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected reproof!"

Having passed "the grim waste of a prickly scholastic theology," he was anxious to help others across. "Tests and orthodoxy," in his experience, "have done more harm to the growth of true Christian piety in this country than anything that I know." The test having been abolished in the case of professors, let it now be abolished in the case of ministers. "If it be manifestly through all the physical world a prime purpose in the mind of the Supreme Reason to create as great a variety of differentiated individuals as possible, under a common type,

it cannot be according to His will that absolute identity, and with it monotony, should prevail in the moral world. The fact is that, if honestly carried out, as a sacerdotal pedant like Laud or a stiff old Calvinist like the late Dr. Begg would carry it out, the unqualified subscription would result in filling the Church with a motley troop of the most unthinking, servile, superficial, shallow, sophistical, and hypocritical persons that could be found in the country."

While he criticised all the churches, not one would he utterly condemn. "I love them all with a perfect love," he said; and he went to them all, or to a sufficient variety of them. He had the breadth of his mother, who often went to hear Methodist and other dissenting preachers, being dissatisfied with the Established ministrations. Her son "always regarded Methodism as a potent spur in the lazy flanks of John Bull," and thought it not entirely misplaced even in the capital of Scotland, where we hear of him presiding at a Methodist meeting and writing a sonnet to the minister. He has been seen,

for that matter, on the same platform with General Booth and his "hallelujah lasses." So far was he from being annoyed at the existence of Dissent, he approved of it on principle. Read this remarkable passage in his "Four Phases": "Priests are not known in the Church. The people only are the priesthood; each individual in the congregation has the value and the dignity of a priest. From this equality of personal dignity before God two remarkable phenomena have flowed, both specially characteristic of modern society—the abolition of slavery and the rivalry of religious sects. . . . The external unity after which some religious persons sigh existed naturally under heathenism, where the individual conscience was merged in the State, exists now also in Popish countries, where the same conscience is merged in the priesthood; but in the Christianity of the early Church, founded as it was on a direct appeal to the conscience of the individual sinner, such a purely external and mechanical idea could find no place. The right to exist at all as a Church estab-

lished the right to dissent from other churches by asserting its own convictions when such assertion seemed necessary. . . . Christianity has thus become the great mother of moral individualism, and the many sects, which are so apt to annoy us with their petty jealousies, are, when more closely viewed, merely a true index to the intensity of our spiritual life." "Dissent from any dominant body, even though it may proceed from the exaggerated importance given to a secondary matter, will always produce the good result that the dominant body will thereby be stirred to greater activity and greater watchfulness; so that, in this view, we may lay it down as one of the great lessons of history that the best form of church government is a strong establishment qualified by a strong dissent." \*

Not that he was blind to the advantages of unity. "Unity," as he said, "is the indispensable condition of all common action," and he was scandalised, as others are, at the failure of Christian societies to act in common for the suppression of the

\* What does History Teach ?



evils denounced by their common Leader. But why should common action be put off till amalgamation and uniformity were attained — supposing these to be desirable? “A harmony is achieved,” he said, referring to the history of religion in Scotland since 1843, “in the common action of two divided forces that to the undivided unity was denied.”\* And writing to a friend in the southern kingdom, he said: “I have never been able to understand why Churchmen and Dissenters should not live together like brethren, as only different varieties of the same species, each having its peculiar and incommunicable excellence.” “Let the churches be different and love one another, and until they learn that they have not learnt their A B C.”

One matter on which the Churches might agree to differ, he thought, was the form of church organisation. “I am a good Presbyterian,” he wrote in “Alma Mater” six years ago, “but have no quarrel with Episcopacy, or even Popery, as a mere form of government in the Church.

\* Christianity and the Ideal of Humanity.

But if any man assert that one special form of church government, Popery, Presbytery, or Episcopacy, is of Divine institution and of universal obligation, against such doctrine I protest, both as a reverential student of the course of God's doings in Providence, and as a philologist trained to the just interpretation of historical writings." "The form of social existence which the early Church assumed was that which naturally belongs to a brotherly association, democratic; . . . but all that the Apostles required was that all things should be done decently and in order."\*

"Only in one point," he says in a private letter, "I can agree with the democratic theories of the hour, that if democracy is practicable anywhere it is in the Christian Church; because in that Church, or perhaps in the very idea of the Christian religion, there are principles and tendencies which go right in the teeth of

\* "Christianity and the Ideal of Humanity"; including also articles on the "Place of Women," "The Scottish Covenanters," "Wisdom," and "David, King of Israel."

that rebellious individualism and inorganic confusion and factious hostility which sooner or later drive democracy into its natural culmination of absolute despotism."

Blackie's personal position in the matter of church fellowship was peculiar. "I support the Established Church in policy, but I attend the Free," was his own way of putting it. He was a strong opponent of disestablishment. In a letter written during the Irish Church controversy of 1868, he expressed his opinion that disestablishment would be "extremely unwise" even in England, and "an unmixed evil in Scotland." In the same letter, however, he said: "I do not anticipate much harm from the contemplated overthrow of the Established Churches of this country."

When he came to live in Edinburgh in 1852 the Professor became a regular attendant at the St. John's Free Church, because Dr. Guthrie was the minister—a man whom he coupled with another reverend nobleman, Norman Macleod: "Two men, the large human breadth, the sunny cheerfulness, the strong good sense, and the

dignified grace of whose preaching will remain deeply engraven on every Scottish heart as long as Scotland is Scotland." The stricter State-Churchmen did not accept this excuse from the man they had supported for the Greek Chair; but he cared nothing for their cavillings. He "could not see the difference between Free Kirk and State Kirk without a microscope." In later years the Professor generally attended the Free High Church, finding edification both in the public ministry and the private friendship of the poet-preacher, Dr. Walter C. Smith.

If a preacher were earnest, Blackie could tolerate him; and any preacher blest with honesty and sense could be sure of a warm appreciation. No preaching, however wonderful, could satisfy him if it were not practical. What, he asked, would Christ say of our

Slowness to love, and hot haste to be rich,  
Folly high-throned, and wisdom in the ditch?

What would he think of our "gilded parades," and "sense conjured into nonsense in God's name"? "It is not by

acts of formal imputation of the righteousness of the Saviour that Christians are rendered worthy of eternal life," this prophet said in the last book he wrote; "it is by living faith in a divinely commissioned teacher, manifested in the career of a Christlike life of devotion to the cause of humanity and the offspring of a Divine Father." "One thing is needful," he had said twenty years before; "money is not needful; power is not needful; cleverness is not needful; fame is not needful; liberty is not needful; even health is not the one thing needful; but character alone—a thoroughly cultivated will—is that which can truly save us; and if we are not saved in this sense we must certainly be damned."\* This is what he had in mind when he declared that "No education is complete of which Christianity is not an integral part." The heresies that fill the whole vision of some educationists were of quite secondary importance in Blackie's eyes. "Nothing is more certain," he wrote in 1887, "than that the

\* Self-Culture.

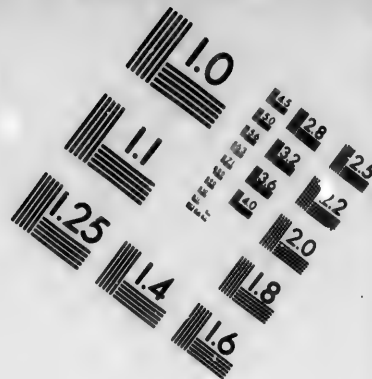
early confessors and martyrs never were called upon to commit themselves to any such doctrinal subtleties" as we find in the creeds; "and in the Epistles of the Apostles a man must be strangely blinded who does not see that the 'heresies' which they most sweepingly condemn are not defections from intellectual doctrine, but from a holy life.

"Creeds and confessions? Well, I will confess  
An honest creed. Where'er I look abroad  
I see the living form and face of God,  
Which men call Nature; all whose loveliness  
I garner in my soul with pious care;  
And when I look within, in thoughtful hour,  
I feel a shaping presence and a power  
That makes me know the same great God is there.  
What more? That were enough, had men been  
true  
To their best selves; but, by base lust enticed,  
They fell: till God stretched forth His hand, and  
drew  
Them from the mire, by His own Son the Christ.  
Leave me to Him, in His bright face to see  
God's imaged will, from gloss and dogma free!"\*

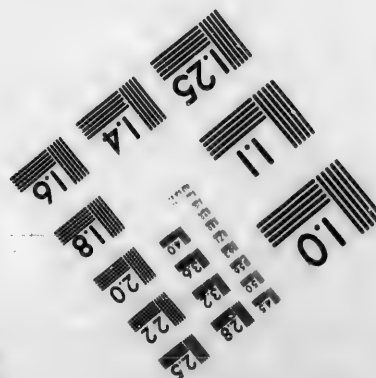
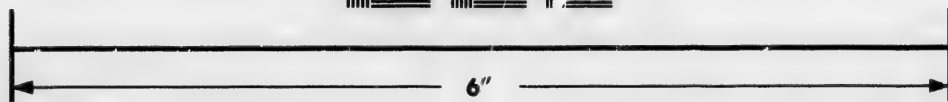
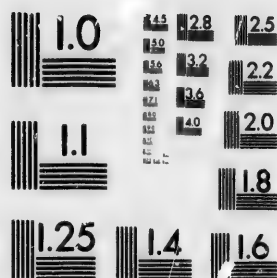
Among Blackie's heresies that of which  
he heard most—perhaps because other

\* In "The Pall Mall Gazette."

folk heard most of it—was his anti-Sabbatarianism. On one Sunday evening, eleven years ago, he gave a lecture in Glasgow on “The Philosophy of Love.” When he came to speak of the love songs of Scotland he waved prejudice aside and burst out with “Kelvin Grove” by way of illustration. A few days afterwards an anonymous artist sent him a sketch of himself, the Sabbath-breaking Professor, carried off on the back of Auld Hornie. But while Blackie was no believer in rigid rules for the observance of Sabbath or any other day, he urged, as a practical man, that the day of rest should be used for quiet and steady thought as well as for genuine recreation. His own Sunday mornings he generally spent in studying the Bible, especially the Psalms and the New Testament, which few if any ministers knew more thoroughly. Later in the day he went to church, and this was no mere concession to conventionality. “He is not a wise man,” he said, “who does not devote at least one part of the Christian Sabbath to the serious work of moral self-review. Not a few severe criticisms have been



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made by foreigners on what has been called the 'bitter observance' of the Sunday by the Scotch, but these hasty critics ought to have reflected how much of the solidity, sobriety, and general reliability of the Scottish character is owing to their serious and thoughtful observance of these recurrent periods of sacred rest."\*

Even his love of beauty was a stumbling-block to many of his fellow-countrymen. If he had kept his æsthetical apostleship away from the kirk, well and good. But when he told the Scottish people to express their religious feelings through beautiful services in beautiful churches, his doctrine seemed to savour of papistry. He once asked some Dingwall folks why they did not cultivate a few flowers around their church, and was told "The lust of the eye is dangerous." "If we are not to appreciate beauty," said he, "why did God Almighty make so many bonnie lasses?" "Giving a graceful dress to a good thing is surely a part of wisdom, inasmuch as it never can be consistent

\* Self-Culture.

either with reason or love to present a good thing to the eye in a repulsive aspect. If mere outward beauty in itself is of little value, when accompanied with inward virtue it is always, as Aristotle says, a good introduction, and deserves wherever possible to stand in the foreground."

An ugly dress, an ugly building, or any other blot on the face of town or country, roused the Professor's indignation. "In this world, everything which we see, or which we are, either is beautiful, or tends towards beauty, or has fallen away from beauty; a calculated tendency to, or normal aspiration after ugliness, is no part of the system of things to which we belong. Deformity is in no case the essential type, but only the accidental variety, of created things."\*

Beautiful world!

Though bigots condemn thee,

My tongue finds no words

For the graces that gem thee

Beaming with sunny light,

Bountiful ever,

Streaming with gay delight,

Full as a river!

\* Discourses on Beauty.

Bright world! Brave world!  
 Let cavillers blame thee.  
 I bless thee and bend  
 To the God who did frame thee! \*

He loved beauty in every aspect, just as  
 he loved religion in all the churches.

Name the leaves on all the trees,  
 Name the waves on all the seas,  
 Name the notes of all the groves—  
 Thus thou namest all my loves.

I do love the stately dame  
 And the sportive girl the same;  
 Every changeful phase between  
 Blooming cheek and brow serene.

Paris was a pedant fool,  
 Meting beauty by a rule;  
 Pallas? Juno? Venus?—he  
 Should have chosen all the three.†

The public became acquainted with the  
 Professor's doctrine of the beautiful  
 chiefly in the form of pungent sayings  
 dropped in the course of lectures on that  
 or any other subject; and the public  
 laughed and clapped its hands. But  
 anything like a complete summary of

\* Songs of Religion and Life.

† In Rogers's "Scottish Minstrel."

his views, always interesting, on this extremely interesting subject, must be sought in the book he published in 1858, "On Beauty: Three Discourses delivered in the University of Edinburgh, with an exposition of the Doctrine of the Beautiful according to Plato." In this work he traced the British scepticism regarding beauty to several causes: "1. The general irreligious and materialistic type of opinion dominant in this country during the last century, partly inherited from the court of Charles II. and the low morality of the Cavaliers, and partly imported from France. 2. The character of the philosophy of Locke, who had nothing of the æsthetic element in his mental constitution." A third explanation specially concerned Scotland. "We had proclaimed a divorce," he said, "between religion and the fine arts, for no better reason than because their marriage had been celebrated by the Pope." "We were, moreover, a very practical and utilitarian people. Our people were ignorant; our clergy were indifferent; our professors were cold; our best men of culture lived

under the freezing influence of the 'Edinburgh Review.' Thus Beauty was publicly butchered in the streets of the 'Modern Athens' in the beginning of the eighteenth century, as heretics were wont to be burnt in Rome; and no man wept."

The writer of such words and of such verses as we have just read naturally took a warm interest in the Chair of Fine Art established in his university in 1879. Professor Baldwin Brown, in a public reference to this a few months ago, said that Blackie had lived to see some of the fruit of his labour, at any rate in the churches. And this brings us back from what, if the beautiful could be separated from the good and the true, would be a digression. In Blackie's healthy mind there was no such separation; he would allow no rupture of "the holy alliance between sweet sounds and a saintly life." With artistic exaggeration he declares, "without any disparagement to Chalmers and other great masters of pulpit eloquence, that no sermons ever preached so powerfully bring forth the fulness of

devout emotion in the soul as the oratorios, anthems and hymns of our great musical composers." This feeling helped him to see good in "even the Puseyites," though

These square caps  
Give their free right hand to the Pope—to us  
With grudging grace their left:

men whose "genuflexions and grimaces" seemed to him but dry husks from which the juice was squeezed in bygone centuries. Writing many years ago from an English town, he says :—"I see nothing but zeal and propriety wherever I go ; and even the Puseyites, who are natural enemies to my free nature, show so much purity and truth that I cannot think a church ripe for destruction where so many various types of good stand forth. If the world can be saved by churches, established or dissenting, I think this country looks prosperous. But there are many things which churches cannot do ; and I confess I look for a new prophet who will write the economical, the philosophical, and the moral into one great whole, for the construction of which the materials are being

now collected. However, the age is a very good age, and the doctrine not all a bad doctrine, though it does not satisfy me. I can afford to live without having a perfectly correct theory of life."

He had, what is far more to the purpose, two sources of inspiration: the Bible, "the book of my life," as he called it, and prayer, in which he engaged before every serious act of his life, "not as a cold form, but as a fervid reality." These were "extenuating circumstances" that few Scotsmen could set aside in judging John Stuart Blackie; and there was a third virtue which turned the scale in his favour with all but the dourest critics. A more striking proof of Blackie's catholicity could hardly be conceived than his love for the Scottish Covenanters. One man, repelled by their gloomy creed and unlovely ways, might compel himself as an act of justice to admit their courage and stubborn consistency. Another, a hot partisan of the Covenant, might in the same way give a grudging recognition to the truths and beauties they trampled underfoot. Blackie had inherited Jacobite



blood through his Stuart ancestry and Covenanting blood through the Naismiths; and his enthusiasm was on both sides. We have heard his vehement condemnation of the theological and æsthetical defects we inherit from these puritans. We must listen to his praise of their virtues, his bold defence of their rudest methods, to his eager appreciation of the boons they conferred upon Scotland. Praise and blame came equally without stint and without partiality. With all his natural leaning towards the picturesque and anti-puritan side, he could declare that the true heroes in the great struggle between king and people were the Covenanters and not the Cavaliers.

The king lost his head—fools may whimper and whine;  
But he lost it, believe me, by judgment divine.

Our kings were the godly, the grey-plaided men,  
Who preached on the mountains and prayed in the glen.

We met Mrs. Jenny Geddes in the last chapter. A minister who once heard him sing in her praise recalls the Professor's

epilogue: "She was quite right. The Pope himself would object to a religion being thrust down his throat!" A Pope with a sense of humour would at any rate enjoy that remark.

There is no room here for a companion song to Jenny Geddes, "The Merry Ballad of Stock Geill." It is the story of a "papistical" image that set out on a procession through Edinburgh streets, but never came home again: "a merry gest that gave the Pope a shog," when "we dashed his bones against the stones and his stump in flinders flew!" There is one Covenanting ballad, however, in "Lyrical Poems" that must have a place here:—

#### THE TWO MEEK MARGARETS.

It fell on a day in the blooming month of May,

When the trees were greenly growing,  
That a captain grim went down to the brim  
O' the sea, when the tide was flowing.

Twa maidens he led, that captain grim,

Wi' his red-coat loons behind him,  
Twa meek-faced maids, and he sware that he  
In the salt sea-swell should bind them.

And a' the burghers of Wigton town  
Came down full sad and cheerless,  
To see that ruthless captain drown  
Those maidens meek and fearless.

O what had they done, these maidens meek,  
What crime all crimes excelling,  
That they should be staked on the ribbed sea-sand,  
And drowned, where the tide was swelling?

O wae's me, wae! but the truth I maun say!  
Their crime was the crime of believing  
Not man, but God, when the last false Stuart  
His Popish plot was weaving.

O spare them! spare them! thou captain grim!  
No! No!—to a stake he hath bound them,  
Where the floods as they flow, and the waves as  
they grow,  
Shall soon be deepening round them.

The one had threescore years and three;  
Far out on the sand they bound her,  
Where the first dark flow of the waves as they grow  
Is quickly swirling round her.

The other was a maiden fresh and fair;  
More near to the land they bound her,  
That she might see by slow degree  
The grim waves creeping round her.

O captain, spare that maiden grey,  
She's deep in the deepening water!  
No, no—she's lifted her hand to pray,  
And the choking billow caught her!

See, see, young maid, cried the captain grim,  
The wave shall soon ride o'er thee!  
She's swamped in the brine, whose sin was like  
thine;

See that same fate before thee!

I see the Christ who hung on a tree  
When His life for sins He offered;  
In one of His members, even He  
With that meek maid hath suffered.

O captain, save that meek young maid;  
She's a loyal farmer's daughter!  
Well, well! let her swear to good King James,  
And I'll hale her out of the water!

I will not swear to Popish James,  
But I pray for the head of the nation,  
That he and all, both great and small,  
May know God's great salvation!

She spoke; and lifted her hands to pray,  
And felt the greedy water,  
Deep and more deep, around her creep,  
Till the choking billow caught her.

O Wigton, Wigton! I'm wae to sing  
The truth o' this waesome story;  
But God will sinners to judgment bring,  
And His saints shall reign in glory.

With such horrors as this in his mind,  
who can wonder that Blackie's "Lines  
written at Magus Muir" became an

apology for the murderers of an arch-  
bishop :—

Lament who will the surplice rent,  
And mitre trampled low;  
I cannot think the blow misspent  
That felled our priestly foe.

Who sent him here? A perjured king.  
His work? With churchman's art  
To bind young Freedom's mounting wing  
And crush a people's heart.

\* \* \*

So perish all who join the name  
Of Christ with tyranny!

Prate not of law and lawyer's art!  
When kingly sin is rife  
The law is in a people's heart  
That whets the needful knife.

O Scotland! O my country! Thor  
Through blood hast waded well;  
From glorious Bannockburn till now  
The tyrant hears his knell

Rung from thy iron heart. And we,  
In lone rock-girdled glen,  
Or purple heath, erect and free,  
From harsh knife-bearing men

Inherit peace. Lament who will  
The mitre trampled low—  
Not all are murderers who kill:  
The cause commends the blow.

A doubtful doctrine this, for easy times; but the poet saw with the eyes of seventeenth-century Scotsmen, and felt the iron that had entered into their soul. As he put it in prose, writing to commend the project of a monument for Peden the Prophet, "There cannot be a doubt in the mind of any intelligent student of history that, as we owe our political independence to the valour and stout endurance of Wallace and Bruce, so the rights of conscience were secured to us by the persevering efforts of the men who, from John Knox downwards, based our Scottish Protestantism, not on the ordinances of the monarch, but on the convictions of the people." The Peden Monument was inaugurated by the Professor on his visit to Cumnock in 1892, when he also made a pilgrimage to Richard Cameron's grave on the battlefield of Ayrsmoss. Nearly thirty years before he had been one of the chief speakers at the erection of an obelisk to mark the spot, in Sanquhar, where Cameron and his followers declared war against the Stuart dynasty in 1680.

Far back in the story we saw John Stuart Blackie, after mounting the pulpit stair, turn back without entering and come down again. This seems a convenient place to say that he did stand in the pulpit after all, with his neck free from bands and his name from "the reverend." A volume of "Lay Sermons," published in 1881, he describes as originating in a series of Sunday evening addresses which he gave to the Young Men's Association connected with Dr. Guthrie's congregation. The book contains, however, at least two discourses preached on Sunday evenings in St. David's Established Church, of which the Rev. Alexander Webster was minister. "At a meeting of the Hellenic Club," Mr. Webster says, "Blackie made some kindly allusions to myself, and I in return said it was a great pity he was not a minister, for I was sure he could preach as well as most ministers. 'Yes,' said he, 'I think I could, and I don't mind trying in your church.' He did try, and his first sermon was on 'The Politics of Christianity'; the second was on

'The Land Laws,' and a very racy discourse it was." His other subjects included "The Creation," "The Jewish Sabbath," "Faith," "The Utilisation of Evil," "The Dignity of Labour," "The Scottish Covenanters," and "Symbolism, Ceremonialism, Formalism, and the New Creature." From any or all of these might be quoted his now familiar views in bright and original setting; but we must leave Blackie the Preacher. With Blackie the inspirer of preachers we have been dealing all along. Scotland has been often taught by him unawares through other lips. Here is one instance of a prompting more direct than that which came to many sermon-makers through his books. Some time ago a minister received from the Professor a series of texts, with a few "heads" and "versicles" to suggest the outline of possible sermons thereon. The texts themselves are very suggestive of the Professor's own way of thinking:—Judge not according to appearance, but judge a righteous judgment; Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low



estate; "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat":

When you are blamed as God blamed Adam,  
Blame yourself and not your madam;

My brethren, be not many teachers;  
Praise the Lord with dance; As a jewel  
of gold in a swine's mouth, so is a fair  
woman without discretion; Speaking evil  
of dignities; Speaking the truth in love;  
Let every soul be subject to the higher  
powers; Be not ye called Rabbi!

This account of Blackie as a teacher of  
religion cannot better be closed than by a  
prayer of his own—according to one who  
loved him much, "the sweetest and most  
pathetic thing he ever wrote":—

O for a heart from self set free,  
And doubt and fret and care,  
Light as a bird, instinct with glee,  
That fans the breezy air!

O for a mind whose virtue moulds  
All sensuous fair display,  
And, like a strong commander, holds  
A world of thoughts in sway!

O for an eye that's clear to see,  
A hand that waits on Fate,  
To pluck the ripe fruit from the tree,  
And never comes too late !

O for a life with firm-set root  
And breadth of leafy green,  
And flush of blooming wealth and fruit  
That glows with mellow sheen !

O for a death from sharp alarms  
And bitter memories free :  
A gentle death in God's own arms,  
Whose dear Son died for me !

## XX.

### "SELF-CULTURE," AND SOME OTHER BOOKS.

"THE pen always makes me serious," said Blackie; but it never made him dull. Few writers have had the gift of treating at once so sunnily and so seriously important topics that are generally disfigured with gloom. Sir William Hamilton, who has been described as "knowing everything," wrote to Blackie in 1852, "Your writings display, with much curious learning, remarkable originality and force." This judgment needs no discounting, though it was a testimonial. Blackie himself said little of his literary productions; but his answer to a recent interviewer may be quoted:—"Of my philological works the *Horæ Hellenicæ* and the 'Wise Men of Greece,' and my 'Homer and the Iliad,' contain some of my best work; while in poetry

the 'Wise Men of Greece' and the 'Lays of the Highlands and Islands' seem to have pleased; but these things don't trouble me much!"

Most of his books have been already mentioned and many of them laid under contribution in the telling of this story; but several demand more notice. "Self-Culture" in particular refuses to be dismissed in a summary fashion. Few of its companions had a very wide circle of readers; but this book has run through twenty-four editions, not to speak of a shorthand version, in this country; it has been well pirated in the United States; and it has been translated into French, German, Italian, Greek,—in fact almost every European language and I believe several others. The book was written as a holiday amusement in a summer month, and the Professor at first meant it for a trio of lectures to his students in Edinburgh. The students doubtless got most of its wisdom in the course of lectures on Greek literature; and the second thoughts of the author gained him a world-wide audience of students old and

young. The financial profit on this little book of ninety pages, the smallest of all his works, handsomely made up for the author's loss on his largest, the four-volume Homer. "The little book is really a wonder," the author wrote to a friend soon after its issue. "Hath not God chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the little books to take the breath out of the big ones!" It was not for money he wrote, however. Excluding "Self-Culture" on the one hand and "Homer" on the other, the total sales of his books did not reach the cost of their production. He wrote, as he sang, because he must. He had a message to give, and he could not hold it back. "It seems my destiny to be a bookmaker," he wrote in 1883, "and no man need try to escape his destiny any more than to jump out of his skin." Such reward as he cared about he found in the improvement and the gratitude of his fellow-men. Letters of thanks for the strengthening, stimulating and brightening influences of his little book came from every class of society

and all quarters of the globe. "I have often looked upon Self-Culture," a poor minister's wife wrote lately, "as coming next to my Bible. Years ago I could, by having frequently read it, repeat many portions by heart." A few scraps added here to the previous quotations may help to create an appetite for the whole production. No attempt is made to summarise the whole book, or to follow the Professor's careful classification, which largely adds to the usefulness of the book as "a Vade Mecum for Young Men and Students, on Self-Culture, Intellectual, Physical, and Moral."

"An idle man is like a housekeeper who keeps the doors open for any burglar. It is a grand safeguard when a man can say, 'Variety of occupation is my greatest pleasure, and when my task is finished I know how to lie fallow, and with soothing rest prepare myself for another bout of action.'"

"It is a great loss to a man when he cannot laugh; but a smile is useful specially in enabling us lightly to shake off the incongruous, not in teaching us to

cherish it. Life is an earnest matter; and no man was ever made great or good by a diet of broad grins. There is no more sure sign of a shallow mind than the habit of seeing always the ludicrous side of things; for the ludicrous, as Aristotle remarks, is always on the surface."

"The modern Prussians, like the ancient Greeks, understand the value of military drill, and make every man serve his time in the army; but we rush prematurely into the shop, and our citizenship and our manhood suffer accordingly."

"To prevent the contagion of bookishness, the best thing a young man can do is to join a volunteer corps, the drill connected with which will serve the double purpose of brushing off all taint of pedantry and girding the loins stoutly for all the duties that belong to citizenship and active manhood."

Of games and gymnastics he advises "for boys and young men, cricket; for persons of a quiet temperament, and staid old bachelors, bowls; for all persons and all ages, the breezy Scottish game of golf."

"They tell me he's a great man," once said a caddie on St. Andrew's links, when Blackie was playing, "but it takes a man with a great head to play at golf!" This in parenthesis. The Professor resumes:

"In rainy weather, billiards is out of sight the best game. In comparison with this, cards are stupid, which at best, in whist, only exercise the memory. Chess can scarcely be called an amusement; it is a study, and a severe brain exercise, which for a man of desultory mental activity may have a bracing virtue but to a systematic thinker can scarcely act as a relief." The game to which Blackie himself used to sit down when the day's work ended was backgammon. "To sip a cup of tea with Lucian or Aristophanes in one hand may be both pleasant and profitable; but dinner is a more serious affair, and must be gone about with a devotion of the whole man." It should be "seasoned with agreeable conversation, but never mingled with severe cogitations or perplexing problems."

"As for drink, I need not say that a glass of good beer or wine is always



pleasant, and in certain cases may even be necessary to stimulate digestion; but healthy young men can never require such stimulus; and the more money that a poor Scotch student can spare from unnecessary and slippery luxuries, such as drink and tobacco, the better. Honest water certainly has this merit, that it never made any man a sinner; and of whisky it may be said that, however beneficial it may be on a wet moor or on the top of a frosty Ben in the Highlands, when indulged in habitually it never made any man either fair or fat. He who abstains from it altogether will never die in a ditch, and will always find a penny in his pocket to help himself and his friend in an emergency."

This was as far as the Professor went in his later years as a temperance reformer. Forty-five years earlier his hostility to whisky was nothing short of fanatical, in his father's eyes, and this was one of the reasons why the young man was sent to Germany; though Alexander Blackie himself had begun life with an aversion to drinking, and had acquired

the taste for wine as a social duty ! The Professor's will was of stubborn metal, in no danger from our drinking customs, and he did not always appreciate the magnitude of the danger to the average young man.

"Drinking songs," he says in his book on Highland literature, "are out of fashion nowadays, and perhaps with no great loss. It is difficult, however," he adds, "to conceive the typical Highlander without whisky. Like a German who does not drink beer, a Scotsman who takes no part in ecclesiastical politics, or an Englishman who does not read "The Times," he may be a very excellent person but cannot be accepted as a normal specimen of the type to which he belongs." That is the pity of it. Happily there has been a great change even in Scotland since the beginning of the century, when a minister would get drunk at a funeral.

The book "Four Phases of Morals" was an expansion of four lectures delivered in 1869 before the Royal In-

stitution in London, and was dedicated to the president of that body, Sir Henry Holland. It has passed through two editions at home, but it has been of still greater use abroad. In Russia, for instance, it was translated soon after its first appearance, and was for many years very popular among students and such reading public as there is; but its career was cut short by administrative order. Mr. Jaakoff Prelooker, formerly a State teacher in Odessa, has told the story. He was announced to lecture on "The Religion of Count Tolstoi" in Old Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, a couple of years ago; and Professor Blackie, who had introduced and even entertained Prince Krapotkin in 1886, had readily consented to preside. The Russian began by saying he was particularly glad to meet the author of a book which had been condemned to an *auto-da-fé* by the same spirit that had driven him, the lecturer, out of his native land. Up sprang the chairman, caught the lecturer by his shoulders, and began to shake him, exclaiming, "Dear me, dear me! What

book have they interdicted?" It appeared that in 1885, "when the reactionary policy of the late Tsar took a decided turn for the worse, it was found that the 'Four Phases of Morals' were not based on Greek orthodox ethics and did not even contain any reference to them. And so the poor book was suppressed by the censorship and condemned to an *auto-da-fé* along with the works of J. S. Mill," Blackie's old friend and antagonist, "and a number of similar works. Apparently," Mr. Prelooker says, "the author of 'Four Phases' was neither aware of the popularity of his work in Russia nor of its final suppression there."

Next to Self-Culture, Blackie's Life of Robert Burns has had a larger circulation than any of his other works. In a letter written at the end of 1887 the Professor says: "I am just putting through the press a Life of Burns for the 'Great Writers' series, which I hope will be found sympathetic and equitable, and free from the extremes of patriotic idol worship and Pharisaic sourfacedness." This

was the only book Blackie ever wrote to order. "I was asked to do it," he told an interviewer\* last year, "and at first I refused, for I can never do work to order. I have never done it. But then I thought a little, and I said to myself: There are two kinds of persons who may write that life—first, the blind hero-worshipper, who will write a useless blatant kind of work, and then another much worse person who will play the self-righteous moralist with Burns, and probably look at him through his own myopic lenses. I felt that I understood Burns, and consented, feeling that I could find the medium course." The poet, as the Professor once said, "knew very well how to preach, but his practice was a most miserable performance."

The biographer was careful to avoid an exaggeration of praise even when looking at Burns as a poet. Nothing, he said, could be a greater mistake than to imagine that Burns was the creator of the lyrical art of his country. "The most common Scottish song-book is studded over with songs of first-rate excellence

\* For the "English Illustrated Magazine."

which derive no inspiration from Burns, and which Burns, with the loftiest flight of his genius, could not have surpassed:” \* some of which, indeed, he could not have equalled.

In 1883, the year after his retirement from the University, Blackie returned to that study of German literature which had brought him his early fame, and which he had never altogether abandoned. He now published “*The Wisdom of Goethe*,” a selection of passages from the poet’s writings, translated, classified, and prefaced by an estimate of the poet’s character. The editor’s object was “to impress on young men with all seriousness” and on authority which they would respect “that life, though a pleasant thing, is no joke; and that, if they will go to sea without chart, compass, or pilot, they have a fair chance to be wrecked.” The personal imperfections of the authority in question his Scottish admirer does not hide, though he does explain and extenuate. This

\* Preface to “*Minstrelsy of the Merse; the Poets and Poetry of Berwickshire*.” 1893.

"manual of wise words for guidance in fruitful action and sound thinking" is dedicated "to the Rev. Walter Chalmers Smith, D.D., a large-hearted preacher, a generous theologian, and a healthy-minded poet," by "his old friend the editor."

Blackie as a "Scotch reviewer" we have known in the early days, and we have seen him modestly thankful that he had not to go on magazine-writing for a livelihood. But he never deserted the magazines for long. They were a necessary channel of communication with the great public to whom the prophet was sent. The main stream of his message overflowed from book and lecture, to form articles in the magazines, letters to the newspapers, and sonnets for both.

Mr. Blackwood, in a farewell article last April, recalled the fact that John Stuart Blackie had been a contributor to the pages of "Maga" since 1832. He was "the oldest contributor, the faithfullest friend, by whom the tradition of the 'Maga' of the beginning of the century was handed on to the present day." "He

would come in like a fresh breeze into the old Saloon, his voice coming before him, perhaps with a 'Hallo!' and stir of greeting—perhaps with an old song: anyhow and always the most agreeable interruption."

"Perhaps," Mr. Blackwood says, in a tone excusably doubtful, "it is a great deal better that we should have professors who never heard of Ambrose's—nay, that there should be no Ambrose's, no Noctes, no wild talk or laughter such as used to echo over half the world: but only tea-drinking and Greek plays, and things elegant and classical and adapted to the taste of a more refined generation." "We liked something that could stand sturdily against the wind which, alas! is too fond of Edinburgh—fronting the very East with a laugh and a shout, not blown off Southward with all its academic skirts blowing before it, as soon as the moment of relief comes."



## XXI.

### ENGLISH EXCURSIONS.

BLACKIE's career as a public lecturer dates from the first half of the century. The burst of platform activity that followed his release from class-room duties in 1882 was only the culmination of an old habit, restrained at first by diffidence and always by conflicting duties. Five years before he left Aberdeen we hear of him refusing an invitation to speak at the Watt festival in Dundee. "I might make a bad speech after all," he wrote. "A man should never travel seventy miles unless he is sure of making a good speech, and my speaking depends generally so much on the impulse of the moment that I cannot calculate on this." "The most telling things I do," he once remarked, "are accidental." Another invitation to Dundee next year was accepted, but he would not promise to speak about any particular

topic. "If I were to foreclose myself at present by fixing a subject, I might have cause to repent it afterwards," he said; and he added, "I never expected you to pay my expenses, but as the professors of Marischal College are not remarkable for wealth, it were affectation in me to reject the offer when made." The time came when institutions could afford to offer his expenses and a good deal more, regardless of subjects. It came to be an understood thing that Blackie might do as he liked with his subject. If he lectured on education he was sure to entertain the audience with a dozen digressions on matters more or less closely related, such as Scottish song or the politics of a tiger. If he lectured on Scottish song, digressions on education were equally certain. It is a mistake to suppose that he never prepared his discourses. He would have the various "heads" scrawled across a sheet of foolscap, in his pocket if not in his hand; and if the sudden digressions were more slashing the considered sentences were not less pungent and epigrammatic. Whatever he said, his way of

saying it was unique. The one thing his audience knew they might expect was the unexpected ; and an element of personal risk always lent excitement to the occasion. If the Professor did not stop before a young lady as he strode up and down the platform, and demand an answer to some question he had just thrown out, he would at least give the chairman a shaking or flourish a staff within an inch of his head. In England as well as in Scotland the Professor's lectures were in great demand. John Bull heard himself denounced as an insolent monster, and only cheered.

Where Blackie went the air seemed to freshen and the clouds to lift. The distinction of his presence, the kindly keenness of his tongue, redeemed any London drawing-room from the commonplace. Mr. Blackwood has this reminiscence :—" We remember once his entrance into the large dim dining-room of the Deanery at Westminster, in the midst of a decorous party, faintly literary, in the days of Dean Stanley—who, as is well known, took Scotland under his protection generally—

where Blackie's sudden appearance was like a fresh breeze, the very atmosphere of the open day amid the subdued tones of the place."

One of the Professor's London letters shows him in the more distant company of another Broad Churchman:—"We heard Maurice last Sunday at Lincoln's Inn—very beautiful and pious, and harmoniously thoughtful, but not great or effective. There seems to be a kind of choking gas in the English Church which prevents even superior men from using the bellows of their lungs in a natural way." This reminds one of Blackie's eulogy upon the Scottish pulpit, in his famous speech at the Wallace Monument stone-laying. "In the English pulpit," he said, by way of contrast, "the natural vigour and power of sturdy John Bull seldom appears; your Anglican preacher, in fact, does not preach—he reads from a paper, and that in as tame and toothless a style as possible, like some lady's dog in a drawing-room, so exceedingly well-bred that it can neither bark nor bite and is utterly useless as a watch. But in Scotland we preach with

our whole hearts and from lusty lungs," as well as from a "rich variety of literary talent."

One of the friends whom Blackie always went to see in London was Thomas Carlyle. This paragraph occurs in a letter dated May 14, and written in 1874, but the Professor habitually left out the year:—"I paid a flying visit last night to the Chelsea prophet. I found him flashing about in his usual style of hilarious savagery and one-sided wisdom, and was fain to shelter myself against his emphatic denunciations of all modern ideas under the triple shield of Heraclitus, Aristotle, and Hegel. His hand shakes so now that he can write only in pencil. Otherwise he is quite well. To-morrow," adds the peripatetic Professor, "I leave for Oxford, Gloucester, Wales, and Dublin."

Carlyle was one of the few men with whom Blackie found it hard to get a fair share of the conversation. One Sunday night he went to Chelsea resolved to have his say. "I contrived," he says in a published interview,\* "by starting as

\* In "The Strand Magazine."

soon as I got into the room, to open the conversation, and went on from topic to topic till they mounted to a dozen; but to none of my themes would my stout old friend give an assenting reply. At last in desperation I shouted out, 'Very well, I think you've come to "The Everlasting No," so you and I can't agree.' Off I went; but we remained good friends for all that."

"One night I shook him—yes, shook him. His poor wife used to sit there and never speak. I was in his room on this particular Sunday, and his wife particularly wanted to say something. But there was not the smallest chance. I got up, took hold of him, and giving him a good shaking, cried, 'Let your wife speak, you monster!'; but for all that he wouldn't."

"He was hard-hearted and hated sinners. He called here" in Edinburgh "once, just when the great noise was going on about the convicts being underfed. He began talking about them. 'Puir fellows! Puir fellows!' he said; 'give them brown soup and a footstool, and kick them to the devil.'"

It was to Carlyle that Blackie naturally inscribed the "War Songs of the Germans." "My old and esteemed friend," the Professor wrote in his dedication, "you and I have had many stiff battles about not a few things; but in two points I have always felt that we are at one—in a stern love of justice and a hearty detestation of all sickly sentiment;" and have arrived by independent roads at the same conclusion on the political relations of France and Germany.

A letter written to his sister in 1864, describing a visit to Alfred Tennyson at Farringford, may be given with little abbreviation. "He is a big strong-built fellow," the Professor writes of the poet, "dark and sallow, more like a Spanish captain of privateers or an Italian brigand than like a hilarious John Bull blushing with health and activity and port wine; with a grand Ionian head and Herculean shoulders. In manners he is plain, simple, natural, and rather quiet. He is no match for me in play of tongue, and I presume a hundred small wits from town will dominate over

him in this way; but what he says is significant, and he gives you an impression of thorough honesty, thoughtfulness, and truthfulness. He has the common faults of the poetic temperament: that is, he is apt to be moody, and sometimes makes himself miserable with odious trifles which a practical man would skip over. He has spent £10,000 (he ought to be specially grateful to Heaven that being a poet he ever had it to spend) in buying up the ground around him to prevent tasteless shopkeepers and Cockneys from blocking up his beautiful views. Still, he is sadly annoyed with the ungraceful boxes which small shopkeepers who have made a little money put up at his very gates—certainly the plainest little tasteless small piles of brick that I have ever seen, and peculiarly inappropriate to the green Isle of Wight and leafy Freshwater. His wife is a delicate and lovable but somewhat frail flower; but his children are princes, with the most gentlemanly grace of limb, the finest features, the most open expression and the grandest Apollo-like locks, which, however, imperious custom



at public schools will certainly cause to suffer speedy amputation. Hitherto they have been educated at home. I have nothing more to say except this—that Tennyson would have been a much happier man if he had some business in the world besides being a poet. He feeds too much on himself, wants variety and action, and is apt to waste time in fastidious trifling. Scott and Burns represent what appears to me a much more healthy and useful type of poetry—though of course I estimate Tennyson, in his peculiar line, very highly.”

Six years later, Blackie was in London speaking at the anniversary dinner of the Royal Literary Fund, of which corporation he was a member; and he was put up to propose a toast “coupled with the name of Tom Taylor.” “Tom Taylor, and not Thomas Taylor, Esq.,” observed the Professor. “His name is known far and wide. But I am a poor uncultivated uncovenanted Scot, and I know nothing at all of Tom Taylor, not having seen any one of his plays or read any of his artistic criticisms. Well, then, as I know nothing

about Tom Taylor, I was informed by the Secretary that I might enlarge upon the general subject, and say something about the drama. I will say, then, that to write a good play that will seize upon the noble few without pandering to the base many is one of the rarest achievements of the human mind. A good play is a rational and noble amusement,—second only in utility to a great sermon from the Apostle Paul. And with regard to that other function of our excellent friend Tom Taylor, whom I have yet to know in the flesh—I don't think he can be a very large man, like Ajax or Agamemnon, for no man with a majestic form could be called Tom Taylor; with regard to his other function, that of writing the artistic criticisms of 'The Times,' it is a function even more useful than that of writing a good play. For a great number of people in this world wish to have opinions about all subjects; but in regard to pictures they are far too ignorant, far too stupid, far too unpractised to have any opinion of their own; and therefore, if they went to an exhibition without any previous

notice of what was a good or what was a bad picture, they would puzzle themselves into a state of bemuddlement altogether intolerable. Therefore a gentleman like Tom Taylor, who comes forward and tells them what they can admire with safety to their own taste and respectability, confers a most substantial benefit upon these poor, puzzled, and otherwise altogether benighted people. I beg leave to say no more." But he did say more, and handsomely made up for his banter, when he dedicated his "Wise Men of Greece" "to Tom Taylor, Esquire"; signifying "in a small way," the Professor says, "the respect which I entertain for your character and efficiency as a literary man."

There is one likely little newspaper story of Blackie in London that may have the space of a paragraph. The Professor went to see the performance of Anderson, "the Wizard of the North." As he was making his way in, Blackie "felt something unusual in his coat pocket. He found it was an egg, and he took it out and popped it into the pocket of a young man who was just before him in the crush. Blackie

watched the young man to his seat, and when the wizard asked his fellow professor to take an egg out of his pocket, Professor Blackie promptly replied that he had not such a thing about him, but he believed that that young man (pointing to his victim) was ready for such an emergency. Then there were roars of laughter at the astonishment of Anderson and of the youth."

One more incident of an English visit may be mentioned simply for the glimpse it gives of Pegasus in hobbles. The Professor was staying at a hydropathic institution in Yorkshire shortly after he left Aberdeen. There was "no less a thing than a journal or paper called 'The Ben Rhydding Ariel,'" he wrote to his sister, "of which I was appointed editor and to which I gave not a few contributions both in prose and verse. I had also to write the whole or two-thirds of the whole clearly out, above forty pages. This was no small labour, you may imagine, to an impatient devil like me" (no holiday task for an angel, he might

have said) ; "but I was advised by the good example of my wife always to find a joy in making myself useful to others." Perhaps it was on this occasion, if he ever had time for a walk, that he came across the big-boned Yorkshire swine-herd who has since been immortalised in a tract on education. To some complimentary remark of the Professor's, the swine-herd proudly answered : "I am the harchitect of those pigs !"

## XXII.

### FARTHER AFIELD.

IN these gadding days, with Japan grown stale, American experience a drug in the book-market, and the explorers of all nations treading on each other's heels in Africa, the Professor's journeys seem insignificant enough. He had no ambition to measure his miles by the thousand. But, comparison aside, he travelled much and often abroad in the intervals of his Scottish explorations. He could sing—

I've wandered east, I've wandered west,  
In gipsy-wise a random roamer;  
Of men and minds I've known the best,  
Like that far-travelled King in Homer.

I've seen the domes of Moscow far,  
In green and golden glory gleaming;  
And stood where sleeps the mighty Czar,  
By Neva's flood so grandly streaming.

I've stood on many a storied spot,  
Where blood of heroes flowed like rivers,

Where Deutschland rose at Gravelotte  
And dashed the strength of Gaul to shivers.

I've stood where stands in pillared pride  
The shrine of Jove's spear-shaking daughter,  
And humbled Persia stained the tide  
Of free Greek seas with heaps of slaughter.

I've stood upon the rocky crest  
Where Jove's proud eagle spread his pinion,  
Where looked the god far east, far west,  
And all he saw was Rome's dominion.

I've fed my eyes by land and sea,  
With sights of grandeur streaming o'er me,  
But still my heart remains with thee,  
Dear Scottish land that stoutly bore me.

O! for the land that bore me,  
O! for the stout old land,  
With mighty Ben, and winding glen,  
Stout Scottish land, my own dear land!\*

Perhaps his most celebrated journey, though it was not of a kind to bring him under the spectacles of the Royal Geographical Society, was the three months' Mediterranean cruise of 1878. We can imagine the astonishment of the Egyptians, filled with "curiosity, and from their point of view a quite laudable curiosity," as he admitted in one of his descriptive

\* Songs of Religion and Life.

letters to "The Scotsman," "to comprehend the nature and to make researches into the character of a strange-looking white-haired old gentleman, walking on his own legs, with a many-coloured Turkish sash about his loins, and having his head topped with" a ventilator cap of a conical shape, "very much like the headgear of those formidable gentlemen the Prussian soldiers." We can hear through his ears "the camel's surly groaning," "the water-wheel's dull moaning,"

the yelping crew  
That howl and yowl the long night through  
at Luxor, where he wrote "The Litany of the Nile."

From the host of grinning creatures,  
Naked boys with sooty features,

Good Osiris, save us!

Ho ro! Little naked

Paunchy boys on Nile-stream!

To the land of breezy weather,  
Freshing showers, purple heather,

Bring us back, Osiris!

Ho ro! Good Osiris,

Heather-bloom and breezes!

He saw little of flies, fleas, mosquitoes,



and scorpions, but the hot wind was to him as bad as all the rest, and doubtless helped to inspire those remarks about Egypt that worshippers of the past have found so shockingly irreverent. He manfully resisted the three Arabs who tried to drag him up the Great Pyramid in the usual fashion. With the help of his own arms he got to the top. There, with two other Caledonians, he lustily sang "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," declaring Burns a much bigger man than Cheops, and fulfilled a vow by writing a letter to the Principal of Edinburgh University. The descent, he said, required caution, but he "had done far more slippery things in Mull and Skye."

After his return to Edinburgh we find him "making a study of the great German work of Brugsch," and composing, "as a sort of rhythmical amusement," "The Roll of the Kings of Egypt," to be sung, if any one wants to sing it, to the Gaelic air "Agus ho Mhòrag!"

But he did not rush off to Scotland as soon as he had shaken the dust of the desert from his feet. Sailing northward

he came to Smyrna, where he was amused by the frequency of "HOMER" on the shop-signs. He found, however, that the modern bearer of the ancient name "did not pretend to deduce his genealogy from the great Mæonian minstrel with the same zealous accuracy that a Highland Maclean or Maclucas would set down his descent from the Apostle John or the Evangelist Luke."

"The lions, specially and properly so-called, of Smyrna," he says, "I did not see. I have a strong natural aversion to being pulled by the nose in regular form to see local lions, even of the loudest roar." There was one lion, however, that he had set his heart on seeing, and taking a railway ticket to Ephesus he rode over the ground once dignified by the temple of Diana, now a "medley of ruin." "I study living men and women, not dead bones," said Blackie, when an ambulatory talk was interrupted by the suggestion that he should stop and examine a pre-historic mound. No associations, however venerable, could obscure in a healthy modern mind like his the present wretched-

ness of the countries he was visiting. "The Turks," he wrote, "evidently know not how to govern. Everything rots into rags or pines into decrepitude before them. They are weighed in the balance and found wanting." In a private letter from Messina soon afterwards he wrote: "I am glad that I have been altogether outside of that wretched squabblement and babblement about the war. Both parties are in the wrong to a certain extent; but England much more than Russia. Turkey is doomed, and England has too much sense, I hope, to wish to prop it up. What we should have done is to have joined Russia against Turkey at the commencement, and then claimed our just right in the division of the spoil. In these entanglements the knot is always cut by the sword, and we kept on signing protocols."

In Sicily he soon forgot the dust and heat of Egypt,—Sicily, "the pearl of islands," with its city of Girgenti "in a situation superior even to that of Edinburgh." There were lions round Girgenti, too, that he made up his mind to visit

in his usual pedestrian way. When he "set off on foot to make a raid through the antiquities," he found there was one lion he had forgotten, and that was himself. "The good people made a very marked demonstration of a habit in which semi-civilised and barbarous people indulge largely—the habit of staring tremendously at a stranger;" and even, in this case, following and surrounding him. With "a little decision," assisted perhaps by a flourish of the old familiar stick, the Professor shook off all the lionizers except two or three. These were intelligent students in the local gymnasium, who got the great foreigner's leave to accompany him on the excursion. Perhaps his heart softened towards the shortcomings of the Scottish universities as these young men unconsciously revealed the state of learning in modern Agri-  
gentum. They were anxious to know, among other things, whereabouts Edinburgh might be, what political connection England had with Scotland, and whether the inhabitants of the foreigner's country were Christians. "Noi siamo perfetti

Cattolici," they innocently said; "We are perfect Catholics!" The Professor assured them that Scotland had the same faith as Sicily, though blest with neither Pope nor bishops. After five hours of stiff walking the little party got back to the town, the ancient acropolis. "The same buzzing of human flies," the Professor tells us, "took place that had accompanied my departure. They literally formed a ring about me, and entered the little inn where I lodged in a crowd to get a peep of what to them was evidently a remarkable sight—a white-haired old perambulator of the country, who could speak fair Italian, and walk for five hours up hill and down hill, and perhaps be a Christian. The police now took notice of the affair, and came into the house to see that no harm might happen to the stranger. One of them spoke English, and told me to take care what I did with my money, for I was not in 'Inghilterra.' I thanked him for his good advice, gave him a stave of 'All the blue bonnets over the Border,' with an autograph of the distinguished stranger for a memorial, and then went to

bed," as the only refuge from the embarrassments of popularity. But "these Agrigentine flies," he is fair enough to say, "were not of the shameless and importunate kind which were my habitual horror on the banks of the Nile."

Now his troubles all are o'er,

sang the Blackie Brotherhood at their  
festival on the next St. John's Day ;

Welcome to the Professor !

Tell the news in brugh and glen,

Blackie he is come ager

Blackie can do anything,

Sermon preach, or ballad sing,

Write a book, or climb a peak,

Chat in Gaelic or in Greek ;

Ever learning something new,

Holding fast the good and true,

What he trows he tells right free,

*'Αληθέυων ἐν ἀγάπῃ.*

While men love the Gaelic tongue

Ever shall his praise be sung ;

More than all their chiefs had done

Blackie for the Gael has won ;

Now the Celtic Muse shall be

Set in place of high degree,

Where the light of lore doth beam

In King James's Academe.

Now with spirits full of glee  
Blackie in his place we see;  
Scotland when he was away  
Seemed more empty than to-day:  
Let the times be e'er so sad,  
Let the world go e'er so mad—  
Pious thanks and cheerful mood  
Well become this Brotherhood!  
Sing then, ye unworldly men,  
Blackie he is come agen!  
Tell the news in brugh and glen,  
Blackie he is come agen!

The Blackie Brotherhood, it may be explained, was a society more purely sociable than the Hellenic, though largely composed of the same men. Dr. John Brown, the biographer of "Rab and his friends," was one of the members.

Only four years ago the Professor, his appetite for travel unappeased by flitting from corner to corner of this island, thought he would like to see Constantinople. Away he went to the East, visited the Turk at headquarters, and finally landed on the more familiar shores of Greece, where he had an opportunity of instructing the Athenians in their own language. While staying at an hotel

in the capital, the adventurous octogenarian fell ill, and it was thought advisable to remove him to the British Embassy. While this was being done, he brandished his trusty staff before a waiter and asked him what it was. "*μπαστούνι*," said the waiter—"mpastouni," one of those Italian corruptions from which the language of Plato is not yet completely purged. Down came the stick on the waiter's back, with the reply, "That's not *μπαστούνι* but *ράβδος*!" The story lies before me in a setting of general eulogy on a page of the St. Andrew's University Magazine, across which the subject of it all has scribbled:—

Little Jack Blackie, so crouse and so crackie,  
 Sat eating his Christmas pie;  
 He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum  
 And said "What a good boy am I!"

The Professor paid at least four visits to Germany after his appointment to the Greek chair. In 1871 he joined the Berliners in welcoming the troops on their return from the war with France; and a flying trip to the heart of Russia was an incident of the same summer.



More than once Professor Blackie was urged to visit his multitude of friends on the other side of the Atlantic, but without effect. He did not ignore the problems of Greater Britain, by any means. In a letter replying to a Canadian invitation he said:—"Seeley's 'Expansion of England' I have read with great sympathy. It is a difficult problem how to maintain unity along with such complex multifariousness. For the Colonies, I am inclined to agree that a free confederation of kindred states is more likely to be lasting than a concentrative subjection." As for the invitation itself, he says:—"I have been a great traveller in my day, but have instinctively confined myself to my own country, or countries which have a great and a fruitful past. New countries interest me little"—like that other professor, when an American visitor expatiated on the glories of a certain city only twenty years old and boasting 20,000 inhabitants. "If it were 20,000 years old and had only twenty inhabitants," sighed the Oxonian, "how much more interesting it would be." "New countries interest

me little," said Blackie; "but might do so, perhaps, if I were accidentally thrown into the midst of them and could share in their young hopes and help on their struggles. For I am decidedly an active animal; and where I cannot act I do not care to know."

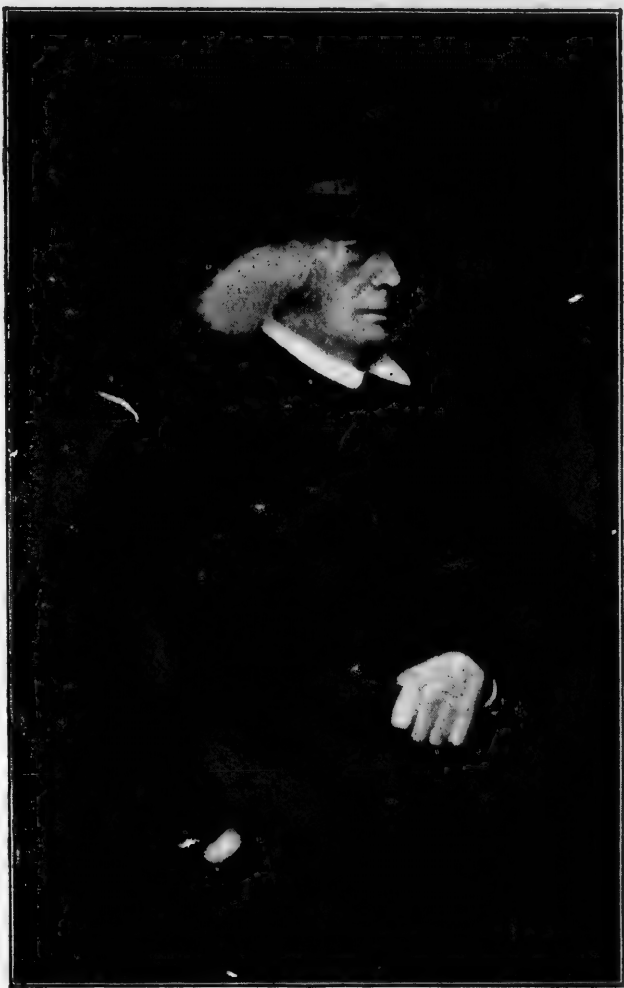
What a welcome he would have met in the Colonies! An old student, the son of a fellow-professor, writes thus in the pages of "*The Liberal*":—"It was the writer's fortune, once, in the dense Australian bush, hundreds of miles distant from the nearest civilisation, to come across a shingle-spitter, who had seen better days, but whom the drink-demon had reduced from the status of a scholar to that of a waif and a pariah. As we sat beside his camp-fire watching our 'billy' of tea boil, as soon as he knew I hailed from Edinburgh, he cried, 'Man, how's old Blackie?' In the very bowels of the earth once, when down some five hundred feet in the famous Prince Imperial Gold Mine on the 'Thames Field,' New Zealand, a humble miner, who, nevertheless, could write M.A. after his name, accosted me with the query,

‘I say, mate, were you under good old Blackie in Edinburgh?’ Go where you pleased—and I have wandered over a good part of the world’s surface—there you would find men who not only had been students under the grand old man, but who loved him and revered him even as sons a father.”

## XXIII.

### THE MAN, AND SOME OF HIS FRIENDS.

WHEN Blackie left the Greek Chair in 1882, he retired into a holiday of hard work. His lecturing activity, as we have seen, redoubled; and flights by train here, there, and everywhere had no more effect on his health than the "one shirt" tramps of long ago. It was something of a penance, however, for such "a locomotive animal" to be shut up for seven or eight hours in a railway compartment. How he felt when he could not use his legs we know from that "philosophy of limping" letter in 1851. "Sitting, in fact," as he told his disciples, "is a slovenly habit, and ought not to be indulged. A man will read a play or a poem far more naturally and effectively while walking up and down the room than when sitting



*Photo by Macara, Edinburgh.*

PROFESSOR BLACKIE IN 1877.

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sleepily in a chair" or travelling on a cell-system railway.

It is hard for any one who never met him to imagine the extent to which motion, Perpetual Motion, pervaded the Professor's existence. His quick but graceful movements, the free, vivacious play of features, the elasticity of his limbs, would have done credit to any Frenchman, and never ceased to amaze the solid race inhabiting this island. His mother was perplexed by his "over-liveliness" when he was seven years old; and an Edinburgh lass found the same fault with him fifty years afterwards. An old friend looked in at the door of Sir George Reid's studio in Aberdeen one morning. He was drawing back, seeing the artist engaged, but the sitter, who was our Professor from Edinburgh, at once called him in.

"Do you think he'll make anything of it?"

"Yes," said the Aberdonian, "certainly."

"I was thinking he wouldn't," said the Professor.

"Why not?"

"I'm afraid he's beginning to think like a bonnie lassie in Edinburgh, the other day. 'Dinna ye like me?' I asked her. 'Na, I dinna.' 'Hoo's that?' 'Ye're ower leevin'.'"

As lately as last year the springs of liveliness were bubbling up as briskly as ever. When he visited Aberdeen and gave almost his last lecture, on January 16th, 1894, he said he felt particularly thankful to God for enabling him at that stage of his existence—eighty-four years five months and eighteen days—to speak as if he was eighteen and to skip about the platform. He added, by way of moral, "To whom much is given of him very much is required; and I feel that if I do not speak the gospel of nature at my time of life I ought to be shot!"

The secrets of this wonderful prolongation of vigour do not all lie hidden in the ancestral past. John Stuart Blackie took care of the constitution he had received, and

His best care of all  
Was to have no care at all.

He kept the commandment, "Be not



anxious what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed," in all its clauses. Indeed, he nearly lost his election to the Greek Chair by the unprofessional clothes he wore and the unconventional things he said when paying his "respects" to the Bailies of Edinburgh. As for food, he ate what was set before him, and if you asked him afterwards what he had had, very likely he would remember nothing but the *sauce piquante* of conversation. He drank, but not freely. He very seldom smoked. He was a devotee of water externally applied, and to this, with plenty of open-air exercise, and a faculty for sleeping, may be attributed his blessed unconsciousness of liver and nerves. That he never needed spectacles was due, in his own opinion, to the big straw hat that shaded his eyes at home and the wideawake when out of doors.

What the exact connection was between his physical health and his mental disposition, how far the serene and hopeful spirit kept the body in trim and how far the healthy body should have credit for

the healthy mind, may be left for psychologists to puzzle over. It is certain that each acted on the other. It is also a fact that for the making of his character there went not merely inherited gifts and the influence of good associations, but a well-reasoned trust in God and a deliberate and constant self-lifting. To a great extent Blackie, with a force of will partly inherited and partly cultivated, formed his own temperament. He was an optimist on principle. His nature was sensitive; a sneer, an unkind word, fell on no thick skin when it hit John Stuart Blackie. But he reasoned that sneers and unkindness were contemptible; that if allowed a lodgment in the mind they would freeze up the sources of happiness and of energy, and therefore his ears should be as if sealed against them. Editorial attacks, which were neither few nor always good-tempered, he did not trouble himself by reading. Newspapers, indeed, were not much in his line; he would get some one to tell him the principal news of the day at breakfast, would perhaps read some article of

special interest, and would then dash off to his work. It was wise to be cheerful, so cheerful he would be, in spite of wrongs without and within. After a long and warm theological debate one day with Dr. Whyte, of Free St. George's Church, the Professor said, "If you have the writing of my epitaph, I know what it will be: 'Here lies a man who had every virtue but a sense of sin.'" "Could Socrates himself have said it better?" asks Dr. Whyte, who knew how little spiritual pride beset the man behind the speech. "Woe's me," said Blackie, not entirely in jest, when he had been learning to play croquet; "it appears to me the fittest picture of the difficult game of life. Woe's me that at both I feel myself right so often by accident and wrong by intention! Alas, poor Pro!" But "alas" was a rare word on Blackie's lips, and woe a very casual visitor in his heart. Long ago, he came singing into a room where Dr. Macgregor was. The minister did not know him so well then as in after years. "Sit down, my friend," he said, "and I will diagnose you: Up in the

heights to-day, down in the depths to-morrow." "No," said Blackie, "never in the depths, never in the depths!"

Entwined with this sunny optimism, generally deemed the endowment of irresponsible natures, was an intense moral seriousness. The world he found a beautiful place, but there were blots upon it to be wiped out. The root of all evil was unwisdom, and to the uprooting of unwisdom he devoted his energies: unwisely now and then, if you will. The eccentricities which marred his work, in the opinion of the straitlaced, and concealed it altogether from the eyes of the superficial, were simply flashes of the internal fire that made all his highest achievements possible. A friend who charged him with being eccentric received an indignant denial. "I am not eccentric," he said; "I am just natural." The common use of the word implies a reproach that he was certainly entitled to resent. No men are alike. Every man has a centre to revolve around. If Blackie had forced himself out of his natural orbit because

it cut across the plane on which Mrs. Grundy and the bulk of mortals move, he would have been truly eccentric. Blackie did not love to be singular: he simply lacked the hatred of singularity that moves his fellow-men from the orbits marked out for them by nature. When Blackie, walking with a minister through the streets of Ayr, suddenly sat down on the nearest doorstep to cut the pages of a book; when, coming to the house of a kinsman, and finding no one but an old lady who had served in the family since he and she had been in their teens nigh sixty years before, he took her out for a walk in the garden and gave her a swing in the children's playground,—he was just being himself. A more guileless, simple soul than Blackie could hardly be found above the age of twelve. With the mind of a seer he had the heart of a child.

Blackie's public peculiarities, as a matter of fact, had one very happy result. They attracted notice to matters from which the public habitually turns its listless eyes, and gilded many a most wholesome pill. "There is more sense in Blackie's

nonsense than in some other folks' sense," he once said when taken to task. And here Dr. Whyte's description of his friend must be quoted once more: — "Like Socrates, he was not unlike those Athenian busts of Silenus which had pipes and flutes in their mouths; but open them, and there was always the image of a god within! How often have I said to myself, after hearing the soundest sense, the deepest and the most apt and pertinent truth, and the most sweet and loving wisdom from my friend, how often have I said, 'Can this be the same man who was disporting on that platform amid such loud laughter last night?'—till the Silenus mask, and the god within, came again to my mind. They who did not know our Socrates intimately and lovingly did not know him at all."

Greater men than Blackie were proud to have this intimate friendship with him; and few men had such a brilliant list of visitors and correspondents. Gladstone, Carlyle, Ruskin—"a small edition of Carlyle, but a delicate and dainty edition"—Browning, Froude, Max Müller, F. W.

Newman and his brother — at whose creation as Cardinal the Professor was present,—Bunsen, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Rosebery—"the wise young Laird of Dalmeny,"—Sir David Brewster, Sir William Hamilton, Dean Ramsay, George Macdonald, Cardinal Manning, Kingsley, Guthrie, Macleod, Blaikie, "Christopher North," Dr. Trench, Lord Neaves, Mrs. Bishop, Sir Noel Paton, Sir George Reid, Sir Henry Irving, Miss Mary Anderson, and his neighbour Principal Rainy, "a fellow incapable of talking nonsense"—these are a few of the names. Blackie used to correspond with Browning on postcards in Greek, puzzling the inquisitive postman with such a signature as *Ἰωάννης Οἰκονόμος Μελανίσκος*. His favourite motto, *ἀληθεύων ἐν ἀγάπῃ* or *πλήρωμα νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη* ("love is the fulfilling of the law"), appeared on a corner of every envelope he addressed. Sometimes the legitimate curiosity of the Post Office authorities would be equally baffled by his English. That a letter to an old student at the University of Jena found its way to Java instead is quite

comprehensible. There were words in his letters which neither life-long intimacy nor skill in deciphering the undecipherable could make head or tail of.

It was only to be expected that much of Professor Blackie's correspondence should find its way to Professor Blaikie, and *vice versa*; for the similarity of the names was aggravated by Blackie's shabby treatment of his distinctive "c." Every now and then the Free Church Professor would receive some such covering note as this from the Professor of Greek: "My dear *Doppel-gänger*, or second self, as the Germans say, I suppose the enclosed must be meant for you.

"Blind eyes, that blindly could mistake in me  
A talking Sophist for a grave D.D.!"

When Professor Blaikie was travelling in America, he constantly had to undeceive visitors who thought they were seeing and hearing the champion of oppressed populations, and who sometimes refused to be undeceived. At home, when cheques for the Celtic Chair and letters of misdirected thanks were followed by the



indignation of anonymous ladies at the theologian's supposed partiality for the stage, the situation became more than embarrassing.

Blackie was no great frequenter of theatres, but he was fond of a good play, saying it had more influence than an ordinary sermon. He thought much the same of a good novel, though the intoxications of incessant novel-reading and incessant playgoing were equally contemptible to him. A friend one day asked him to read "For the Right." "I will read the book," he promised, "as the hens do the heaps of rubbish, picking out the grains of corn." A little while afterwards he wrote: "I am quite proud of myself to-day! I have finished the book, not for the sake of the book but for your sake, and verily I have had my reward. I used to creep through books; now I have learnt to march, and to run, and to gallop, and to jump and skip, in a quite miraculous manner. Now I shall know what a good novel means; it is really a good sermon, and a great deal better than most sermons. I have taken down

three special texts from it." "I have found," he once said, "not a few excellent sermons in novels which I should have sought for in vain in our pulpits."

Sir Henry Irving, it is said, kissed Blackie on the forehead in gratitude for his outspoken defence of the drama. In this the actor only followed the example of the Professor, whose love for kindred souls of either sex could not express itself in our mere insular handshake. "How he would have enjoyed himself in ancient Athens," says Professor Laurie. "You can see him in the Gymnasia striking right and left at the Sophists, taking off his sombrero till it touched the ground on the approach of the dignified Plato, slapping Socrates on the back and calling him a jolly old blade, and then throwing his arm round his neck and kissing him. That was Blackie!"

The Professor's admiration for Socrates was not altogether shared by his friend Mr. Gladstone. "Do you know," said the statesman to the Professor when they were chatting last year at Pitlochry, "it has always seemed to me that Socrates must

have been a thorough domestic bore, and I have always felt strong sympathy with Xanthippe!" Blackie often disagreed with Gladstone on other subjects, such as "politics, and the Hebrew Devil, and certain of his mythological speculations" in the realm of Homeric theology; and in some respects they were as unlike as two men could be. Yet their common love for Hellenic studies, and far more their intense earnestness in contending for what they believed to be right, were bonds of union stronger than all the forces that might have kept them apart. "An essentially noble and upright man," was Blackie's description of his friend. "He is the greatest statesman since Pitt; nay, he is greater than Pitt." When Mr. Gladstone was ill, Blackie sent him a sprig of white heather, with the Gaelic motto that we saw him inscribing, with the difference of one word, for the Queen—"Hard as the heather and lasting as the fir." The two friends often met, not only in London, but under the roof of Lord Rosbery, the "statesman, patriot, and thinker," to whom Blackie dedi-

cated his book of social and moral essays in 1890. Lord Rosebery was glad to get the Professor out to Dalmeny to give Mr. Gladstone "a little Homeric relaxation" from the toils of a Midlothian campaign; and in the campaign itself they were not always divided. No one who saw the two stalwart octogenarians meet and greet each other on the platform of the Edinburgh Corn Exchange will ever forget the sight or the cheer of two-fold affection to which the multitude was stirred. The elder of the two has gone, and the younger, in his retirement, looks back "with interest, respect, and warm regard upon his life and acts; so genuine, so simple, so susceptible of a pure enthusiasm, so detached from self, so attached to things kindly, pure, and noble."

In his intercourse with great and small alike, Blackie tried to practise his favourite virtues, courage, cheerfulness, and charity—not the first two without the other. "I strive always," he could honestly say, "when I most violently condemn, to appreciate my antagonist's point of view."

I hate none of God's creatures, not even liars and cowards and the systematic whitewashers of unclean things. It is enough that I must pity them." For one invaluable habit he thanked his otherwise barren years at the Bar. "From the lawyer," he said, "I learned that in all matters of difference of opinion there are two contrary statements, each involving a certain part of the truth, both of which must be patiently studied and nicely weighed before a sound judgment can be arrived at." In almost any society—and he was a very "social animal"—his was naturally the dominating but never a domineering influence. Under all the self-assertions inevitable with so lively a nature lay a real humility of soul—a quality overlooked by the casual or distant observer, but never appealed to in vain. This quality of reverence for the Maker of all, and for all that He has made, found its expression in, and drew its nourishment from, a constant habit of prayer. Family worship was a practice carefully observed in his home, and was no mere formality. The Professor himself

led in the singing of a metrical psalm,—the Old Hundredth, the Hundred and Twenty-fourth and the Twenty-third being among his favourites,—or a paraphrase. He knew few tunes, but every now and then he would learn a new one, picking it slowly out on the piano, note after note, and night after night, when the household had gone to bed. The singing was followed by a short passage—perhaps another of the Psalms, or a chapter of Isaiah or of John's Gospel—chosen not indiscriminately, and recited with expressive reverence; and, finally, a prayer, for which the Professor did not always refuse to read from a printed book. “From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs!”

## XXIV.

### THE END.

FOR forty-two years John Stuart Blackie led this rich and active life in Edinburgh, or with Edinburgh as headquarters, scattering over the world the wisdom and sunshine that filled the home. Old, and very old, he grew, with little or no lessening of activity. Time wrote the tale of years upon his face but could neither cloud the mind nor chain the limbs. "I am all that can be expected of an old man," he could write; "healthy and cheerful, and speaking evil of no man." At last, early in May, 1894, when, among other businesses, he was "making a minute study of living Greece from 1821 downwards," he was suddenly attacked one morning with asthma. Seizure followed seizure, each leaving its victim exhausted. When summer came the Professor, accompanied by his wife and

nephew, Dr. Walker, was able to travel to Pitlochry; and there, in the end of July, he wrote this letter to his sister:—

“I have been seized, now four months gone, as a victim to that most graspful fiend Asthma (*ἄσθμα*)—of course of Greek descent, as all diseases are; and not one attack only, but at least half-a-dozen, from the last of which I am suffering sorely now. Once a week at least this gruff customer comes, and puts his merciless grip on my chest and lays me panting and beating on my back. This lasts for an hour or a hundred minutes; and then the monster walks off. But this is not all: he leaves me weak, as weak as he is strong, and I spend a stupid day, trying to think that I am not more than half dead. Now you know the worst. He is not always at my throat, the ruffian; but the danger is that like beggars and subscription papers he will get into the habit of using my chest as a sort of club-house, where he may look in for luncheon any idle day and leave me unfit for any substantial work or any profitable sleep for a



night and a day. I enclose what perhaps may turn out to be my last speech and dying words in a versified form." This is what he enclosed :—

### OUR LIFE DRAMA.

#### IN FIVE ACTS.

Life's a play—a changeful scene  
Of good and bad, whose acts are five ;  
A'fateful strife of God-moved powers  
Which make our human dust alive.

First the babe that from the darkness  
Greets the light with strange alarm,  
And into realms of unknown being  
Stretches forth its helpless arm.

Then the boy—the bright-souled boy—  
Quick with eager ring and rattle  
To run the race, and toss the ball,  
And flourish fist in bloodless battle.

Then the youth, whose hot brain teems  
With lofty schemes of gain and glory ;  
"I, too, may shake hands with the gods,"  
He says, "and stamp my name on story."

Next comes the man, with sober plan,  
Of measured ground a faithful warden ;  
Contented, where he found a waste,  
To trim the clod and leave a garden.

Now comes the end, when he who long  
The stable earth had firmly trod,  
Feeble and frail, with tottering steps,  
Must bow his head and kiss the sod:

Happy if when he leaves this field  
Of wise device and toilsome deed  
He to his sons can say, "Reap ye  
Where I, thank God, sowed fruitful seed."

A few days later he finished his eighty-fifth year. He could not venture out to see the bonfire that the neighbours kindled in his honour; but his pen was able to busy itself answering the messages of love that flowed in upon him from all parts of the country. "My dear Podler," he wrote to his sister on the 5th of August, "your letter of the 25th July was a great delight to me; and I have been only too long of sending you the natural response. But there is a reason for all things. Shortly after your letter, the 28th July arrived; and the good old Scot was forthwith overwhelmed by an epistolary storm of birthday greetings and gratulations that demanded an immediate grateful acknowledgment. Really, I seem to have done some good

to my fellow-countrymen; but exaggeration in matters that touch the public pulse, especially in the case of an octogenarian, is natural; and I must tone it down to something of a more modest estimate. Here in Pitlochry, along with the great English 'G.O.M.', they have been making a god of the small Scottish 'G.O.M.' in a transcendental style." Though less often visited by violent asthmatic spasms, he went on to say, he now felt great weakness; and he was addressing himself "to a pious curtailment of all hopes and fears and ambitions belonging to this sublunary sphere."

From the cottage perched high on a brae he looked his last on the Highland hills that he loved so tenderly, and returned to his Edinburgh home. He was able to attend the opening of the University session, but that was his last public appearance. On the 3rd of December he wrote, in a very shaky hand: "My feet are now possessed by gout, a disease which makes walking difficult and dancing impossible. However, I have great reason

to look back with thankfulness on a long life spent in the service of my fellow-creatures, a service which, as you will see from the enclosed," one of many published expressions of sympathy, "is more apt to be over than under-rated by my good friends in Ayrshire." That he did not reckon himself to have attained perfection was shown, if showing were needed, by his habit of writing out a fresh Greek text every night and trying to live up to it next day.

When the weakness so increased that he could only write with difficulty, and he surrendered the pen into the hand of his wife, his mind went on with its work unchecked. In February, after reading Froude's "Erasmus," he dictated two articles for "The People's Friend," in which he described the old reformer in words peculiarly applicable to himself: "A man of lively wit, pleasant manners, large social sympathies; so that wherever he went he readily made and kept friends. But he was more than all this. He was a profound scholar and an earnest man—a man with whom profound learning could

only serve as the root of a branching tree of large social apostleship."

As February closed, the hope of another earthly summer died away. Weaker and weaker grew the body; but the mind was alert enough to catch and correct a false accent when one of his old Greek mottoes was quoted in his hearing. He asked one of the maids who watched in the room at night to sing him his favourite Psalms. When she came to the words, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," he caught up the verse, saying brightly, "I will fear no ill!" On the evening of Friday, March 1st, the mist fell at length; and as the light faded from his mind the last words were whispered by his lips, "The Psalms of David, and the songs of Burns—but mind, the Psalmist first!" Before another noon the spirit had sunk softly away into the arms of God.

The funeral ceremony became a national demonstration. The groups of robed and official representatives who took their silent places in St. Giles's Cathedral;

the Black Watch pipers who led the procession to the grave with the exquisite airs of "The Flowers of the Forest,"



ST. GILES'S CATHEDRAL.

*From a Photograph by Mr. A. A. Inglis, Edinburgh.*

"Lochaber no More," and "The Land o' the Leal;" the plaid, a gift from the women of Skye, that took the place of a pall; the modest heather that lay between the wreaths sent by the Prime Minister and by the Professor's servants; and, best of all, the heavy-hearted thousands of men and women and children who thronged the streets, expressed a nation's

love and grief. From Scotsmen, and not from Scotsmen only, in every part of the world; from the poor labourer, the grey-haired scholar, the young student; from all sorts and conditions of men came the same message, that in spirit they were part of that affectionate throng; a message telling what he had done for them and how they loved him.

## THE WORKS OF JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

### LIST OF BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS.

1831. *Intorno un Sarcofago, &c.* (Rome.)  
1834. *Goethe's Faust.* (Blackwood.) 1880. Revised Edition. (Macmillan.)  
1843. *On Subscription to Articles of Faith.* (William Tait, Edinburgh.)  
1848. *University Reform.* (Sutherland and Knox, Edinburgh.)  
1849. *The Water Cure in Scotland.* (G. Davidson, Aberdeen.)  
1850. *Lyrical Dramas of Æschylus.* 2 Vols. (J. W. Parker, London.)  
1852. *The Pronunciation of Greek.* (Sutherland and Knox.)  
,, *On the Studying and Teaching of Languages. Two Lectures.* (Sutherland and Knox.)  
,, *Classical Literature in its Relation to the Nineteenth Century and Scottish University Education. Lecture.* (Sutherland and Knox.)  
1853. *On the Living Language of the Greeks. Lecture.* (Sutherland and Knox.)  
1855. *On the Advancement of Learning in Scotland. A letter, &c.* (Sutherland and Knox.)  
1856. *Introduction to Clyde's Greek Syntax.* (Sutherland and Knox.)  
,, *Contribution to "Edinburgh Essays."* (A. and C. Black.)  
1857. *Contribution to "Edinburgh Essays."* (A. and C. Black.)  
,, *Lays and Legends of Ancient Greece, with other Poems.* (Sutherland and Knox.)



*Works of John Stuart Blackie.* 339

1853. On Beauty. (Sutherland and Knox.)
1860. Lyrical Poems. (Sutherland and Knox.)
1864. The Gaelic Language: Its Classical Affinities and Distinctive Character. Lecture. (Edmonston and Douglas.)
1866. Homer and the Iliad. 4 Vols. (Edmonston and Douglas.)
1867. On Forms of Government. Manchester Lecture. (Whittaker and Co.)
- „ Report of Debate with Ernest Jones on Democracy. (A. Heywood and Sons.)
1868. Political Tract. On Government. (Edmonston and Douglas.)
- „ Political Tract. On Education. (Edmonston and Douglas.)
1869. Musa Burschicosa. (Douglas.)
1870. War Songs of the Germans. (Douglas.)
1871. Four Phases of Morals. (Douglas.)
- „ Greek and English Dialogues. (Macmillan.)
1872. Lays of the Highlands and Islands. (Strahan.)
1874. Horæ Hellenicæ. (Macmillan.)
- „ On Self-Culture. (Douglas.)
1876. The Language and Literature of the Scottish Highlands. (Douglas.)
- „ Songs of Religion and Life. (Douglas.)
1877. The Natural History of Atheism. (Daldy, Isbister, and Co.)
- „ The Wise Men of Greece. (Macmillan.)
1879. The Egyptian Dynasties. (J. Thin, Edinburgh.)
1880. Preface to Handbook to Modern Greek. (Macmillan.)
- „ Introduction to Comhraidhean 'an Gaelig 's 'am Beurla. (MacIachlan and Stewart, Edinburgh.)
- „ Gaelic Societies, Highland Depopulation, and Land Law Reform. (Douglas.)
1881. Lay Sermons. (Macmillan.)

340 *Works of John Stuart Blackie.*

1882. *Altavona.* (Douglas.)  
1883. *The Wisdom of Goethe.* (Blackwood.)  
1885. *The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws.*  
(Chapman and Hall.)  
1886. *What Does History Teach?* (Macmillan.)  
,, *Messis Vitæ.* (Macmillan.)  
,, *Introductions to Bacon's Essays and Locke on*  
*Education.* (Ward, Lock.)  
1887. *Introduction to a Dictionary of Place Names, by*  
*his sister, Christina Blackie.* (Murray.)  
1888. *Life of Robert Burns.* (W. Scott.)  
,, *A Letter to the People of Scotland on the Reform*  
*of their Academical Institutions.* (Douglas.)  
1889. *Scottish Song.* (Blackwood.)  
1890. *Essays on Subjects of Moral and Social Interest.*  
(Douglas.)  
,, *A Song of Heroes.* (Blackwood.)  
1891. *Greek Primer, Colloquial and Constructive.* (Mac-  
millan.)  
1893. *Christianity and the Ideal of Humanity.*  
(Douglas.)  
,, *Preface to Minstrelsy of the Merse.* (J. and R.  
Parlane, Paisley.)

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## INDEX.

- Aberfeldy, 186  
 Archaeology, 43  
 Artists, 44  
 Australasia, 310  
 Barrie, J. M. 140, 142, 144, 152  
 Bayne, Dr. P., 68  
 Beauty: 44; 56; "the lust of the eye," 254  
 Biography, v.  
 Blackie, Alex.: 1; marriage, 2; Aberdeen life, 6, 8; second marriage, 13; allowances from, 47; Melrose, 99; letter from, 104; Edinburgh, 108  
 Blackie, Mrs. Alex. See "Stodart"  
 Blackie, Dr. George, 93  
 Blackie, Helen Stodart, 24, 56, 78, 87; marriage, 99; 100, 194, 291  
 Blackie, James, 24  
 Blackie, Marion, 24, 97, 106  
 Blackie, John Stuart: 6; descriptions by his mother, 14, 15, 313; and by himself, 16; boy life, 16; college, 20; law office, 21; religious state, 22, 24; Edinburgh University, 23; letters to Aberdeen, 24; Marischal College again, 28; lessons to the "good-ers," 31; Germany, 34; Italy, 41; home, 46; called to the Bar, 48; reviewing, 54; the Latin Chair, 59, 66; marriage, 85; Germany, 94; the Greek Chair, 102; educational reform, 110; Modern Greek, 122; in class, 136; Hellenic Club, 156; politics, 163; the Crofters, 175; land law investigation, 181; travels in Scotland, 57, 89, 176, 185; Oban, 186; the Celtic Chair, 185; the Queen at Inverary, 200; Scottish Nationalism, 205; his poetry and verse, 218; Apostle of the Good, the True and the Beautiful, 234; Self-Culture, and some other books, 271; English excursions, 285; the Levant and Sicily, 298; the man, and some of his friends, 312; last illness, 329; 85th birthday, 332; the end, 335; a national funeral, 335; personal characteristics, v., 88, 158, 160, 312, 321, 326  
 Blackie Brotherhood, 306  
 Blackwood's Magazine, 283  
 Blaikie, Prof., 322  
 Breakfasts to students, 152  
 "British Weekly," 231  
 Browning, 321  
 Buddha, 238  
 Bunsen, 39, 41  
 Burns, Life of, 280  
 Caird, Dr. and Prof., 188  
 Canada, 214, 309  
 Carlyle, 108, 289  
 Celtic Chair: 185; Sir P. Colquhoun's suggestion, 195; begging, 197; the Queen, 200  
 Charity, 167, 326  
 Colonies, 214, 309

- Conjuror outwitted, 295  
 Covenanters, 260  
 Creeds, 63, 243, 252  
 Crofters: Strathnaver clearance, 176; "political economy," 178; legislation, 183; landlords' first duty, 184  
 Cromwell, 230  
 Democracy: debate on, 164; in church, 248  
 Disestablishment, 249  
 Dobell, Sydney, 220  
 Donaldson, James, 78, 111, 158  
 Drama, 294, 323  
 Eating and drinking, 276, 315  
 Eccentricity, 318  
 Edinburgh University: student at, 23; Greek Chair, 102, 315; professor, 136; snow riots, 149; from "classes" to "asses," 151; Celtic Chair, 196; Fine Art, 258  
 Education: University defects, 20, 36, 37, 74, 76, 95, 110, 111; legislation, 113; Cram and Shop, 115; examinations, 119; classical education, 128  
 Egypt, 299  
 England, 195, 205, 259, 285  
 Ephesus, 302  
 Erasmus, 333  
 Forbes, Dr. P., 30, 33  
 Forbes brothers, with, 34, 39  
 Four Phases of Morals, 239, 278  
 French, 95, 190  
 Geddes, W. D., 82  
 Germany: Student at Göttingen, 34; Harz Mountains, 39; Berlin, 40; Bonn, 94; roughing it, 96; later visits, 308  
 German Literature: Goethe's Faust, 54; Liberation War, 56; War Songs, 225; Wisdom of Goethe, 282  
 Gladstone, 125, 213, 324  
 Greek, 81; Hellenic Society, 82; Æschylus, 83; Edinburgh inaugural lecture, 111; modern and rational Greek, 122; travelling scholarships, 130; Homer and the Iliad, 132; Lays and Legends, 229; in Athens, 307; Browning postcards, 321  
 Guthrie, Dr., 144, 249  
 Hamilton, Sir W., 55, 271  
 Handwriting, 321  
 Health, 25; lame, 96; 307; 314; last illness, 329  
 Hellenic Club meetings, 156  
 Heroes, vi., 230  
 Highlands: travels in, 89, 176, 185, 189; language and literature of, 190; "Gatherings," 194, 302, 330  
 Homer, 132, 302  
 Home Rule, 211  
 Idleness, 274  
 Ireland, 182, 183  
 Irving, Sir Henry, 324  
 Italy: 41; Sicily, 303  
 Kennedy, David, 221  
 Kennedy, Rev. Dr., 99; letters to, 107, 139  
 Kidd, Dr., 66  
 Kirohner, Dr., 54  
 Krapotkin, Prince, 279  
 Languages: learning German, 34, 36; Italian, 44; Gaelic, 190  
 Latin: 29; exercise, 32; lectures on Reformation, 80

- Laughter, 274  
 Laurie, Prof., vii., 163, 324  
 Law: in office, 21; Edinburgh studies, 47; first cases, 48; "Give a Fee," 53, 327  
 Lawson, G. M., 151  
 Lay Sermons, 267  
 Lecturing: 225, 256; Dundee, 285; digressions, &c., 286; last tour, 314  
 Literature and finance, 273  
 Lowe, Charles, 143, 153  
 Macgregor, Dr., 219, 317  
 Mackenzie, Fergus, 143, 146  
 Macleod, Donald, 88  
 Macleod, Norman, 144, 189, 249  
 Marischal College, Aberdeen: 20; Latin Chair, 59; in class, 67; friendship with students, 71; bursary test, 77  
 Marriage, 86  
 Martin, Prof., 79  
 Mathematics, 21  
 Maurice, F. D., 288  
 Mearns, Dr., 29  
 Melvin, Dr.: 61; "Grim," 74  
 Military drill, 275  
 Ministry: mother's wish, 22; "stickit," 46; in pulpit at last, 267  
 Moir, G., 55  
 Morality, 38, 239  
 Motion, 312  
 Mottoes, 241  
 Naismiths, 3, 261  
 Neander, Prof., 40, 41  
 Newmans, the, 321  
 Newspapers, 316  
 Novels, 323  
 Oban, 186  
 Optimism, 315  
 "Pall Mall Gazette," 252  
 Peden Monument, 266  
 Physical exercise, 19, 275  
 Poetry and Verse: 218; his masters, 231; "Give a Fee," 53; class poems, 70, 148; "Angels Holy," 86; translations from Greek, 126, 133; Bonnie Strathnaver, 176; Absentee Proprietors, 181; The Nut-Brown Maiden, 193; Jenny Geddes, 222; Watch on the Rhine, 226; Student Songs, 227; Gordon, 233; Hymn for British Workmen, 236; Origin of Evil, 237; Creeds and Confessions, 252; Beautiful World, 255; "My Loves," 256; Covenanters, 261; Stock Geill, 262; The Two Meek Margarets, 262; Magnus Muir, 264; "O for a heart from self set free," 269; Song of Fatherland, 298; Litany of the Nile, 300; Our Life Drama, 331  
 Politics: 58, 162, 163; maxims, 166; House of Lords, 170; foreign policy, 167, 303  
 Prelooker, Jaakoff, 279  
 "Punch," x.  
 Queen, the, and the Celtic Chair, 200  
 Rainy, Principal, 321  
 Rank and riches, 169  
 Rebellion, 174, 261  
 Religion: early experiences, 22, 27, 29, 39; the Bible, 31, 38, 237, 238, 260; "jist himsel," 234; Atheism, 235; "scientific nonsense," 236; Christ-

- ianity, 239; faith, 239, 251; noble heathens, 240; Psalms, 242, 335; Dingwall boy's idea, 242; tests, 62, 243; dissent, 244; unity of Christendom, 246; forms of church government, 247; church attendance, 249; heresy, 252; beauty, 254, 258; Puseyites, 259; a new prophet wanted, 259; Covenanters, 260; family worship, 327
- Rosebery, Earl of, 321, 325
- Ruskin, 320
- Russia: 279, 308
- Sabbatarianism, 253
- Schleiermacher, 40
- Scottish nationality: 205; Edinburgh West-Endism, 207; Scottish Song, 207, 281; Home Rule, 211
- Self-Culture, 116, 167, 170, 172, 180, 233, 251, 254
- Sicily, 303
- Singing: 161, 218; song-writing, 221
- Smith, Dr. W. C., 250, 283
- Smyrna, 302
- Stevenson, R. L., 136
- Stodarts, the, 2
- Stodart, Helen: marriage, 2, 6; her letters, 4; Glasgow and Aberdeen, 6; "Society," 7; appearance, 9; family cares, 10; death, 13
- Stodart, Marion, 12, 13, 26, 221
- Stuarts, the, 1, 261
- Taxes, 173
- Taylor, Tom, 293
- Tennyson, 291
- "The Times," 123, 177, 294
- "The Young Man," 16
- Turkey, 303, 307
- Utilitarianism, 161
- Vulgarity, 209
- Waddie, Charles, 211
- Wages, 173
- Wallace Monument, 207
- Water Cure: 92; at a Yorkshire Hydropathic, 296
- Webster, Rev. A., 267
- Westminster Deanery, 287
- White, Dr. J. F., 68, 82
- Whyte, Rev. Dr., 317, 320
- Wilson, Prof., 26, 28, 55
- Wyld, Eliza: marriage, 85; 88, 89

MR. ALEXANDER BLACKIE died in 1856, having been a widower since 1847. Of his first family, the eldest and the youngest, Miss Christina Blackie and Mrs. Helen Kennedy, survive. Mrs. Marion Ross died in 1889, at the age of 70; her brother James lost his life at sea in 1851; and the remaining five died in childhood. There were five children in the second family: Archibald, Gregory and George Blackie, Mrs. Jemima Walker, and Mrs. Agnes Mackay, of whom Mrs. Walker survives. All of the second family and one member of the first leave descendants. Miss Marion Stodart died in 1883, in her 99th year.



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